

OXFORD

TOWARDS FREEDOM

Documents
on the Movement
for Independence
in India

1942

Part 1

edited by

Bipan Chandra

with

Visalakshi Menon

Salil Misra


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Documents on the Movement for Independence in India, 1942 Part 1

The *Towards Freedom* series is an endeavour to document the years leading to India's Independence. It goes beyond the overtly political activities of the time and the notion of Independence as only a 'transfer of power'. Rather, it underscores the fact that the struggle for Independence was not merely about attaining political freedom from a colonial power but also comprised efforts to seek social justice, economic empowerment, and cultural autonomy. With meticulously selected historical material from 1937 to 1947, the volumes of the series bring to the fore the activities, attitudes, and ideas of diverse sections of Indian society.

The year 1942 was a defining one in India's history. By the end of the year the equation between Britain and India had irreversibly changed. As Jawaharlal Nehru put it later, the 'iron had entered the souls' of the Indian people. The mass movement long awaited by many finally took place in August 1942 and, contrary to the expectations of the British government, it evoked an overwhelming response. This volume, published in two parts, covers the major socio-political processes of this momentous year.

Bringing together primary sources and archival documents from January 1942 to August 1942, Part 1 of this volume explores the emergence of the Quit India Movement. The documents here cover the period from the Bardoli Congress to the Allahabad Congress and trace the beginnings of the movement. It includes all significant topics such as the Cripps Mission; student politics; Indian political formations—for example, the Communists, the Kisan Sabha, the Congress Socialist Party, the Forward Bloc, and the Radical Democratic Party—as also women and Dalit organizations; and the emerging communal problem. The result is a compelling narrative unravelling a rather nuanced context, in which the Congress hardly appears to be a body that could be steering a movement as powerful as the one of 1942. The shifting logic of popular pressures and how these impacted high politics is borne out clearly in this fresh narrative.



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ICHR: Towards Freedom

General Editor

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Bipan Chandra
with Visalakshi Menon
and Salil Misra

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With a Preface by the General Editor
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Indian Council of Historical Research

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General Editor's Preface

It gives me great pleasure to place in the hands of readers Part 1 of the volume on the year 1942 of the *Towards Freedom* series of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). The project taken up by the Council many years ago is at last approaching completion. Since the volumes in the series have been published at intervals of months and sometimes years, a part of the General Editor's duty has been to state at the beginning of each volume the objective and the general guiding principles of this endeavour. I shall address that task first, as it is customary in this series, and then share with the readers a few thoughts which crossed my mind as I read the present volume.

The agenda of an endeavour such as this series of volumes defines itself in part through editorial practice and partly through attempts towards a statement of objectives. The historical context in which this project developed initially is generally known. While we must not overestimate the influence of that historical conjuncture on the academic inputs which went into the making of the project's agenda, one has to take that into account as one of the formative factors. After the vertiginous years leading to 1947, there came a time when historians turned their attention to those years and archives began to acquire and provide access to source materials. The last years of 'British India' began to be addressed by professional historians and indeed the theme attracted national attention both in India and in Britain. In June 1967, the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson made an important statement in this regard in the House of Commons: '[I]n view of the great interest now being shown in historical circles in the last days of British rule in India ... [there would be published] documents from the India Office records on the Transfer of Power and the events leading up to it'.¹ The announcement included the assurance that 'the editors will be independent historians who will be given unrestrained access to the records, and freedom to select and edit the documents for publication'. The outcome of the project thus framed at the highest level in England was the series known as *The Transfer of Power* edited by Nicholas Mansergh, Smuts Professor of the History of the British Commonwealth at Cambridge. In addition to the announcement made in Parliament, Mansergh, as the Editor-in-Chief, stated that the 'purpose of the series' was 'to make available to scholars in convenient printed form the more important British historical records relating to the transfer of power in India'.²

Arguably, there is an obvious inadequacy in the notion that all that happened in 1947 was a 'transfer of power'. In Indian perception the attainment of independence was a significant moment in the history of the struggle against British rule in the subcontinent. The representation

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th Series, House of Commons, Vol. 749, 30 June 1967, cols 147–8.

² Nicholas Mansergh, ed., 'Foreword', *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, London, 1976, p. viii.

of the emergence of independent India and Pakistan as transfer of power, solely an alteration of constitutional relations, tended towards the occlusion of that history. The focus on the legalistic notion of power transfer and the discourse of modalities of transfer marginalized the more significant part of the historical processes at work. Likewise, the self-imposed limitations of the British documentation enterprise left many issues unaddressed: the project was to select documents from British state papers relating to the constitutional arrangements from the Cripps Mission of 1942 to 15 August 1947. In that discourse, in the official archives and the Viceroy's papers the Indian voice was recorded only in so far as a few important spokesmen of political parties were among those present in negotiations with the British Indian government. The Indian institutions, personalities, and events were included in the documentation only to the extent the official papers took cognizance of them.

That is not to say that the task of documentation in the twelve volumes produced between 1970 and 1983 by Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) was not competently handled by Professor Mansergh and his editorial assistants. These volumes were products of the best of British scholarship. But the initial conception of the project was delimited to certain issues and historical sources. I recall that in 1971 when I invited Sir Penderel Moon, a brilliant officer of the Indian Civil Service and later a member of Mansergh's editorial team, to a seminar at St Antony's College, Oxford, a number of us questioned him about this and he pointed out that perhaps we had not paid attention to the subtitle of the Mansergh volumes, 'Constitutional Relations between Britain and India'. Clearly the agenda for any Indian endeavour towards the documentation of the years leading to independence in 1947 would be different. How it would be different was suggested by Professor Sarvepalli Gopal in a luminous editorial preface to the first volume produced under the present project. He said that the projected volumes aimed to 'present, within limits set by the sources, documents relating to the activities, attitudes and ideas of the diverse classes and sections of Indian society, all of which contributed to the attainment of Indian independence with partition'.³

It is significant that the title chosen for this series was 'Towards Freedom'. While the subtitle emphasizes the focus upon the 'movement for independence', the title evokes discourses in other domains as well—the struggle for social justice, for economic empowerment against exploitation, and for cultural autonomy. These were also prominent discourses within the overarching framework of the Indian people's struggle for freedom. One is reminded of the words of Mahatma Gandhi in an essay he wrote in the *Harijan* a few days before his death, on 27 January 1948: 'The Congress has won political freedom but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom.'⁴ This awareness of different categories of freedom allows space for a conception of the freedom struggle far wider in amplitude than the textbook approach to the struggle for independence from British rule. It makes a struggle for freedoms of many kinds thinkable. And it broadens the idea of a history of freedom struggle. This is how I understand the choice of the title for this series: *Towards Freedom*.

³ S. Gopal, 'General Editor's Preface', in Partha Sarathi Gupta, ed., *Towards Freedom 1943–44*, Delhi, 1997, p. vii.

⁴ M.K. Gandhi, 'Congress Position', *Harijan*, 1 February 1948, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 90, p. 497. Also see 'His Last Will and Testament', *Harijan*, 15 February 1948, where he spoke of economic, social, and moral dimensions of independence, beyond the political independence which had been attained (*ibid.*, p. 526). This document was written c. 29 January 1948, shortly before Gandhi's death, and it was also referred to in the All India Congress Committee (AICC) papers as 'Draft Constitution of the Congress'.

To sum it up, the present series of volumes focuses upon not just the legal processes of the transfer of power and the overtly political activities which brought that about, but also the struggle for freedom in different domains—economic, social, and cultural. The agenda of the series, therefore, is open to the entry of themes relating to the struggle of the peasantry, the working classes, and different sections of people as well as to a broad spectrum of political organizations who in their own light worked towards attainment of freedom.

To anyone interested in the craft of history a pertinent question will be how the documentation will reflect this agenda. The selection of appropriate documents is not an easy task. We are here looking at long-term historical processes such as the slowly evolving ideas about nationhood or class solidarity, the dynamics of popular participation in political movements, the links being forged between movements of the peasantry, the industrial labour and the freedom struggle, the youth and student movements vis-à-vis the political parties, the changing social hierarchy in caste terms in relation to electoral and agitational politics, the gender relationships evolving from the traditional patriarchal structure towards developments that had liberating potentials, the anti-feudal and anti-British movement in the princely states, and the interface between all these trends in the ideational and cultural domains. The instantiation of these long-term processes through events as reflected in documents is the task at hand. The documents reflect fragments of the events which constitute links in the chain of certain historical processes of long duration.

It was decided years ago at an early stage of this project to distribute the work among editors on a purely chronological basis, that is to say each of the volumes in this series would relate to a particular year assigned to an editor. This opened the project to the possibility that the long-term processes would be lost sight of in the depiction of the particularities of the year each editor is taking care of. I incurred unpopularity in the ICHR when I suggested many years ago that a thematic division of labour between the various editors, rather than a chronological one assigning one year to each, would have been a better organizing principle.⁵ I will not elaborate that point again. Whatever the drawbacks or merits of the chronological frame for assigning editorial responsibility might have been, it has been in operation for twenty years and hopefully it will enable us to complete the task before us. For the volume editors the limitation of chronological framework has been probably an irksome constraint. On the whole, the volume editors, each a distinguished historian, bore with fortitude the limits set on their temporal range, and they situate the particular historical conjuncture of a given year in the broader perspective of the long-term processes as they see them in the introduction to the volume. The Editor's Introduction is thus a bridge between the narrative of events and the narrative of the freedom struggle as he or she sees it. The editor's introductory observations also provide a space for the presentation of his or her approach to the themes and issues the volume addresses and the explication of that approach.

As regards the sources from which the documents are collected for the volumes in this series, Professor Sarvepalli Gopal, in his General Editor's Preface, remarked in 1997: 'Although some of the volumes contain documents drawn from regional language sources, a fully comprehensive selection from these sources merit a separate project.'⁶ This was an accurate prediction of the

⁵ S. Bhattacharya, 'The Empire on Borrowed Time: Towards Freedom 1943-44', *The Book Review*, Vol. XXII (January-February 1998): pp. 24-5.

⁶ Gopal, 'General Editor's Preface', in P.S. Gupta, ed., *Towards Freedom 1943-44*, p. vii.

future output, that is, the volumes now coming out. In deciding on what non-English and regional language sources will be collected, the volume editors have exercised their judgement in deploying the research assistance they were provided. Judging by volumes produced till now and the manuscripts now being received from editors and being processed in the editorial office at the ICHR, the editors possibly felt that on most of the themes addressed there exists sufficient source material in the English language and in translation. A more systematic search for and selection of non-English sources would have made this collection more complete, but it was evidently not found to be feasible. We are committed to a schedule which requires us to complete as early as possible the project undertaken in 1988–9 rather than to expand the scope of the editors' search to new sources.

One more point needs to be made about the sources. Probably, in the last decade of the Raj, especially during the World War, perspicacious observers began to sense a debilitation of the imperial powers and the impending decolonization process on a global scale, and the consequent shift in the power relationships—this altered their perception of the politics of independence struggle radically. This was happening globally in old empires, among the people and leaders in the imperial metropolises as well as their colonial peripheries. On the latter process we do have some documentation in the present series, but not much on the shift in the imperial metropolis. This is because *ab initio* the project was meant to be mainly for the collection of sources in India. This was probably because it was clear from the beginning that we have our hands full if we look at the Indian archival sources alone. The mass and density of archival sources generated by the Government in India will be evident to even a layman who glances at the following pages. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, unlike similar enterprises in England, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka to collect sources throwing light on the last days of the British Raj, this series includes a great many activities and events which are not overtly political or constitutional.

A few words on the editorial apparatus in these volumes may be in order. The chapters are generally thematically organized while the sequence of placement of documents in each chapter is chronological, except in some instances where the editor of a particular volume preferred to organize thematically the documents in some chapters. There are two guides for the reader, first the Calendar of Documents indicating the subject of each document and the source, and second, the Index at the end of the volume. An effort has been made to make the volumes as 'reader-friendly' as possible. In some collections of this nature the editorial practice has been to provide a synoptic account of the contents of each document. This has not been the pattern in this series chiefly because it would increase the size of the volumes. As it is, each volume in the series is quite bulky and those editors who tried to trim the size down are to be applauded. The General Editor of this publication series has been *ab initio* given the role of an advisor to the editors of the different volumes and upon his approval the press takes up the task of printing the volumes sent to them. It may be recalled that when my distinguished predecessor in the position of General Editor, Professor Sarvepalli Gopal, passed away in April 2002, no successor was appointed by the ICHR; in fact, he had earlier publicly complained of external interference in his editorial work, and after his death all work on the project was suspended for about five years. I was asked in 2006 to take up the task initiated by Professor Gopal. Upon accepting this position, an honorary one, my first task in 2007 was to persuade the editors of the different volumes to resume the work. It is interesting to note here that the British project for the documentation of the *Transfer of Power* was processed through a mechanism which

precluded external interference in editorial work and ensured inter-party consensus in the parliament.⁷ For this purpose a standing inter-party group of Privy Counsellors was appointed and it included a minister of the ruling party and representatives of the Conservative Party as well as the Liberal Party; thus, once the project was passed by that committee, the task was left to experts duly appointed and no political interference occurred. One might say that there was much that was commendable in the mechanism thus devised in Britain.

It is hoped that the principles of documentation in the *Towards Freedom* series have been adequately outlined above. Since 2007, when I was requested by the ICHR to take up the task as the General Editor of the series, it has been my aim and that of every Chairman and member of the editorial team to complete the project as early as possible. I am glad to report to the readers of these volumes that since I took over charge, a total of 13 volumes have been completed, of which 10 have already been published by the Oxford University Press, and they contain in print over 12,000 pages of documents of freedom struggle and editorial additions such as calendar of documents, annotations, introductions by the General Editor and the editor of each volume, index, and so forth.

The editors of the volumes have had full freedom to exercise their choice in documentation, within certain parameters, and they have been free to focus upon the themes which emerge from the selected documents. An editor of a volume in this series stated what most other editors would endorse that this is not 'an attempt to provide materials for an "official" or "definitive" statement on the history of the freedom movement'.⁸ I accepted the responsibility of being the General Editor of this series since I believe that although the Government of India has funded this enterprise, like many other research projects and institutions in this country, the output of the project is the work of autonomous minds of scholars guided by standards of the discipline of historiography. As I have said in the beginning, not only agenda statements like the one I have attempted now, but practice has defined principles as well, and that is how an academic community works.

* * *

It may be useful at this point to tell the reader how this collection of documents on the year 1942 is structured. While most other volumes in this series are organized thematically and the editor traces each theme through the entire year, the editors of this volume chose a chronological division, Part 1 being devoted to the story till the commencement of the Quit India movement and Part 2 to the period thereafter. In the present collection, Part 1, the chapter division is as follows: Chapters 1 to 3 are devoted to Congress politics and reactions set off by the Cripps Mission, while Chapters 4 to 9 are concerned with the non-Congress players, namely the Congress Socialist Party, Kisan Sabha, the Communist Party of India and other parties on the Left, the organized movements of women, students, backward castes, and the communalist parties. The story of politics with the Congress at the centre is resumed in Chapters 10 and 12. Chapter 11 is concerned with popular mentality under the impact of the Second World War.

This part of the volume is a prelude to the Quit India movement which will be documented in Part 2. That movement seems to have created a deep impression on the minds of the British

⁷ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, House of Commons, Vol. 733, col. 1706.

⁸ Basudev Chatterji, ed., *Towards Freedom 1938*, Delhi, 1999, p. lvii.

rulers. We know now from documents published in later times, for example, the confidential telegram sent by Viceroy Linlithgow to Prime Minister Winston Churchill on 31 August 1942, that the political movement in August 1942 was 'by far the most serious rebellion since that of 1857, the gravity and extent of which we have so far concealed from the world for reasons of military security'.⁹ It will be a reasonable surmise to think that the chief question readers of these pages may have in mind will be *what led to the outbreak of a movement of such proportions in the form of the Quit India Movement in August 1942?* A careful reader of these documents might find answers to that question. Otherwise, the documents will remain just a jumble of mute records of events that occurred, and the reader will miss the wood for the tree. In the first place I would like to draw attention to the political environment outside of the centre stage occupied by the national leaders at the apex. To focus upon the latter has been the dominant trend in the extant historical narratives of the independence struggle. An unintended consequence of this has been to diminish or to ignore the peripheral participants' role. The great merit of documentation in the *Towards Freedom* series is that it enables us to build a more inclusive picture and look at others in the margins of the stage.

Before proceeding further, a few words need to be said about the global context, the Second World War in the background of our story, since this collection of documents is not designed to include documents on international developments. A few days before the beginning of 1942, three events that took place outside of India deeply affected the course of events in India in 1942. First, on 7 December 1941, Japan attacked American forces at Pearl Harbour without warning; thus the USA, which had been following a policy of offering 'all aid to the Allied governments, short of war', was now drawn into the Second World War. Second, on 10 December 1941, the British ships, *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, were destroyed by a Japanese air attack off the coast of Thailand, thus leaving open to Japan the route to Malaya. On 7 December, Japan began the invasion of the Philippines forcing Douglas MacArthur to give up Manila, as a result of which Japan began to control the Pacific for the next four months. The inevitable happened on 15 January 1942, the surrender of the British naval base in Singapore, and on 20 January 1942 the Japanese invasion of Lower Burma. After the loss of Singapore, the British were left defenseless in the Indian Ocean. Their access to Burma (present Myanmar) now was only by land from Assam, a route without roads. Since the rivers and mountain ranges in Burma run north to south, a land route cutting across that terrain from north-east India eastward into Burma would be logistically difficult. Eventually the superiority of the USA in the air and her ability to transport armaments and army provisions enabled the British forces to overcome the Japanese. However, that was to occur much later during the Allied counter-offensive of early 1944. In the period this collection of documents covers, the British position was precarious.

Popular Mentality in Turbulent Times

The months preceding the Quit India Movement were troubled times and that is where we might begin our search for an answer to the question: What led to the Quit India Movement? We see in the following pages hundreds of actors on the stage enacting a turbulent scene, which, in a manner, foreshadows what followed in August 1942. Consider these reports from Delhi, Madras, Calcutta and Bombay: 'There is an almost total strike in progress at the Central Ordinance

⁹ Viceroy Linlithgow to Winston Churchill (personal cable), 31 August 1942, in N. Mansergh, ed., *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. II, No. 662, pp. 853-4.

Department, Delhi cantonment.... There has been some talk of the strikers approaching the Congress but so far nothing in this direction appears to have been done.' The issue, apparently, was the demand for dearness allowance and an incident where a British policeman struck an Indian worker.¹⁰ A report from the city of Madras in February 1942 says that 'one third of the population have left Madras by road and rail' due to 'preparations that were being made in Madras for the defence of the city and false or unfounded rumours about molestation of women by troops, looting by rowdies, etc'.¹¹ Or consider the report for Bengal in February 1942 about 'universally large withdrawals from savings bank deposits and the cashing of Defence Savings certificates'—a clear indication of want of confidence in the British Indian Government in the money market.¹² Or again, news of despondency about the ability of the British to defend India and Bombay businessmen and workers leaving in droves: 'The exodus from Bombay city of Gujaratis, Marwaris, Cutchis and Kathiawaries continues, and some movement towards the Konkan [home of many mill workers] has also started'; among the textile workers, 'very many have left the city', and, as in Bengal, 'withdrawals from Bank and Post Offices are being made on a fairly large scale'.¹³ The Great Indian Peninsular Railway (GIPR) used to have six extra trains running each day on account of the exodus. These are reports in the Home Department files of the Government of India. This situation of unrest—people moving about in search of security, the middle classes' lack of confidence in the stability of the government, proneness to go on strike on the part of the urban working class, and a climate of turbulence needs to be looked at to understand popular mentality in the months before the Quit India Movement. We may identify five factors that went into the making of the scene we have glanced at.

It is fairly obvious that the turbulence from January to July 1942 was to some extent a reaction to the war situation, the advance of the Japanese forces after the fall of Singapore right up to Rangoon. The loss of Singapore caused a drastic fall in the share market in Bombay.¹⁴ In Punjab it had 'a very unsettling effect on people of all classes'.¹⁵ In Cochin there was 'increased apprehension of the public regarding an attack on South India' and educational institutions planned closure.¹⁶ In Bengal, the panic was greater because refugees began to arrive from Malay and Burma in late February—at least 14,000 came to Calcutta and a larger number to Chittagong; the 'thinking public is skeptical of the chance of an effective resistance by the [British] armed forces', according to the report in the Home Department.¹⁷ The United Provinces

¹⁰ Strike in the Central Ordinance Depot, Delhi Cantonment, April 1942: Report by the CID, Chapter 11, Document No. 100.

¹¹ Exodus of about 1/3rd of Madras Population: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras, First Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 3.

¹² Widespread Alarm and Despondency in Bengal: Extract from Fortnightly Report of Bengal, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 20.

¹³ Exodus from Bombay City, Arrest of Leaders Spreading Alarmist News, Alarm among Taxi Drivers Because of Motor Vehicle Drivers Ordinance: Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bombay, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 17.

¹⁴ Bombay and Gujarat: Sense of Pessimism, Unsettled Markets, Withdrawals from Banks and Post Offices: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay, First Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 4.

¹⁵ Wheat Shortage in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab, First Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 10.

¹⁶ Heavy Exodus from Madras City; Misbehaviour of Australian Soldiers in Cochin: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 16.

¹⁷ Widespread Alarm and Despondency in Bengal: Extract from Fortnightly Report of Bengal, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 20.

(UP), that is, present-day Uttar Pradesh, was far away from the war theatre, but broadcasts from Tokyo were listened to and there was 'decrease in reliance placed on news from British sources'; 'wildest rumours' circulated, traders were converting paper into bullion, the Congress statements on 'the inevitability of the fall of government' had an impact and, hence, fear of an impending breakdown.¹⁸ In Bhagalpur in Bihar, people were acquiring weapons like revolvers and investing in land for fear of devaluation of the currency.¹⁹ Sardar Patel declared in March 1942: 'Now the war has come to our doorstep.... Since last two hundred years we have not been allowed to keep weapons. So we are habituated to go to police station even for minor events. But now the police stations are not going to be there.'²⁰ This was a graphic description of the breakdown of government which was anticipated by Congressmen.

Next to an absence of confidence in the stability of the government, an important characteristic of public morale was resistance to the destructive potential of the government's scorched earth policy. It is now forgotten that these were times when the British seemed to be teetering on the brink of defeat and at thus the policy of 'denial' was adopted, that is, the policy of denying the Japanese resources in India, in case they invaded the eastern and southern coastal areas. This meant destruction of boats and other means of transport, and repositories of food grains in those areas. That involved a huge loss of assets to the local population and it also brought to a stop transportation of crops by boats to the market. Second, requisitioning of railway wagons by the government for transporting troops and military equipments constrained marketing of agricultural produce causing loss to farmers on the one hand, and, on the other, scarcity and high prices in the cities. Third, there was also an apprehension in the public mind—and indeed in the well-informed business circles to which Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas belonged—that the government intended to destroy industrial establishments in case that was required in the combat with enemy forces. All these three aspects of the so-called scorched earth policy are documented in this volume. The most distinguished spokesman of the Indian point of view on the issue was Sir P. Thakurdas who said at a meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce at Bombay: 'Do the government expect that the masses and classes will contentedly look on' if the government destroys factories 'put up by private capital and enterprise?''²¹ At the lower level, there were similar concerns. The Bihar Chamber of Commerce recommended a government policy statement on this issue.²² The Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) was regarded as specially vulnerable. There was a rumour abroad that the TISCO was deliberately winding down production and encouraging workers to leave Jamshedpur to avoid destruction by government or by enemy air raid. In late February 1942, the Home Department estimated that of 100,000 labourers, 63,000 had left Jamshedpur with leave and advance payment of salaries from the employer.²³ Strikes—spontaneous or engineered by the employer—and large

¹⁸ Sense of Fear in UP; Popularity of Enemy Radio Broadcasts: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the United Provinces, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 21.

¹⁹ Acquiring of Weapons for Self-defence in Bhagalpur, Purchase of Land, Alarmist Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 23.

²⁰ Vallabhbhai Patel's Speech at Nadiad, 9 March 1942, Asking People to Be Brave and Stand United, Chapter 11, Document No. 34.

²¹ Scorched Earth Policy in India, April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 99.

²² Comprehensive Statement on Scorched Earth Policy Overdue: Bihar Chamber of Commerce's Demand, 30 July 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 125.

²³ Acquiring of Land for Self-defence in Bhagalpur, Purchase of Land, Alarmist Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar, Second Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 23.

scale out-migration from the industrial city continued till July 1942.²⁴ In the Digboi oil fields, the labour force was jittery and wanted 'clear indication that there is no danger to labour being thrown out of employment owing to enemy occupation of the fields or destruction of the refinery'.²⁵ Then there are also reports of 'rumours that effective measures have been taken for the demolition of both Sealdah and Howrah railway stations and the Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory' near Calcutta.²⁶ These popular beliefs, apprehensions, and fears strengthened the nationalist leaders' message that the British were played out as a Global Power.

The third feature of popular mentality that springs to the eye is the instability of the industrial labour force. Despite extraordinary police monitoring of trade unions during the war, the absence of some Left-leaning leaders, and the threat of the Defence of India Act, there were frequent strike actions. Purportedly the issue was quite often dearness allowance, to protect the workers from the impact of war-related inflation and particularly the scarcity of cloth, kerosene, and food grains. This happened oftenest in Bengal since it was nearest the theatre of war; some of the industrial units were Titagarh Paper Mill, Gurupur Electric Welding Works, Steamships of Hoare Miller & Co., Calcutta Tramways Company, and the Port Trust. 'A general wave of uncertainty,' a government report stated, 'a disposition to raise petty grievance, restrict production, and ask for long leave and advances of pay, is shown by reports from all parts of Calcutta and Asansole industrial area.'²⁷ Likewise, 'strikes continue over the question of bonus in Cawnpore', that is, in cotton mills and leather factories in Kanpur, for 'labour there remain jumpy'. The Home Department opinion was that in Kanpur it was 'deliberate fifth column activity. An agitator from Bihar spread a rumour that the baffle walls [against bombs] were to prevent the workmen getting out of the works, and slit trenches [shelters] were to bury them in.... The District Magistrate immediately went down and arrested the author of the trouble.'²⁸ In Kanpur it was also rumoured that the factory labourers were soon to be chained to the machines to prevent desertion, and this caused a wave of out-migration in expectation of that.²⁹ As for Bombay, the government estimated that some 50,000 mill workers were absentees every day in the Bombay Cotton Mills in April 1942.³⁰ We have already seen that in Jamshedpur town, there occurred rampant absenteeism, irregular strike action, and possibly deliberate depletion of the labour force. The city workers, suddenly released from their accustomed work, returned to their village homes in different parts of India and it is probable that in August 1942 they actively took part in political action.

²⁴ Growing Panic, Demoralization, Forward Bloc Activities: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar, First Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 39.

²⁵ 'Extravagant' Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam, Second Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 42.

²⁶ Popularity of Pro-Japanese Broadcasts, Widespread Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal, First Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 35.

²⁷ Feeling that Britain Cannot Win the War: Extracts from Fortnightly Report for Bengal, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 62.

²⁸ Deterioration in Public Morale and Restlessness amongst Labour: Excerpts from Fortnightly Report for UP, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 66.

²⁹ Cawnpore Labour: Rumours and Panic—Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP, First Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 9.

³⁰ Weakening of Public Confidence: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 61.

Fourth, there was unrest not only among the urban workers, but the signs were present even in the rural areas. It took many forms. In many places, there was disruption of law and order and increase in the incidence of crime. The Home Department noted that in UP in February 1942, the number of dacoities was 'probably the highest number recorded in that month since 1918', and that was due to 'the general unrest and particularly the economic unrest' due to food grains shortage. Significantly, recruitment to the British Indian army declined in UP, the traditional recruiting ground of sepoys for the British Indian army from pre-1857 days.³¹ In Punjab, another recruiting ground, 'there continues to be [in April 1942] a decline in recruitment ... and the large number of military deserters contributes to the prevailing feeling of uneasiness'.³²

People's lack of confidence in the stability and staying-power of the government spoke through rumours. Sadhus are said to be spreading 'anti-British and pro-Japanese propaganda' in the Bihar countryside.³³ It is often rumoured that British troops molested women and, in one instance, this led to attack on soldiers in Lahore and the city being declared out of bounds for soldiers. Due to similar conflicts with the local people, a similar decision was taken in Bombay, except that the beach and the red light district remained open to soldiers.³⁴ Refugees from Malaya and Burma brought stories of gross racial discrimination in the distribution of government relief to refugees. It was a fact and no mere rumour that of the two land routes from Burma to India, the better one was reserved for Europeans and the route through jungle was left for Indian and other non-white refugees.³⁵ The large numbers of people fleeing from the city to the countryside brought rumours as well; the panic of thousands leaving was itself disturbing and caused further panic as the Railways ran special trains every day from Bombay in March 1942 and coastal steamers to Ratnagiri were packed with passengers.³⁶ By April 1942, not rumours but news reports, for instance, about the actual Japanese bombing of oil installations at Cocanada and the port at Vizagapattam on 6 April 1942, began to set off a panic exodus to the countryside.³⁷ And when the war preparations reached the countryside, it caused many tensions in rural society; for example, it is reported from Noakhali by Congress workers that troops beat up village people and compelled them to work on military roads, leading to a strike of 20,000 workers in April 1942.³⁸ According to Prafulla Chandra Ghosh of

³¹ Opposition to Scorched Earth Policy, Nervousness amongst Labour, Food Scarcity: Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP, First Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 37.

³² Increased Alarm, Especially among Traders: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Punjab, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 68.

³³ Public Uneasiness, Fear of Further Bombardments: Extract from Fortnightly Report, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 71.

³⁴ Wheat Shortage in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab, First Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 10; Exodus from Bombay, Burying of Wealth by Gujarat Merchants, Misbehaviour of Soldiers: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay, First Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 33.

³⁵ Hardships of Indian Evacuees and Discriminatory Treatment, 5 April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 63; Evacuees in CP and Berar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar, Second Half of May 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 118.

³⁶ Exodus from Bombay, Burying of Wealth by Gujarat Merchants, Misbehaviour of Soldiers: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay, First Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 33.

³⁷ Japanese Bombings in Cocanada and Vizagapatnam: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 58.

³⁸ Letter from Congress Workers of Noakhali to Jawaharlal Nehru on Military Atrocities in Feni Sub-division of Noakhali, 22 April 1942, on Military Atrocities in Feni Sub-division, Noakhali, Chapter 11, Document No. 74.

the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (PCC) not less than 120,000 persons were evicted from their village homes by the government either ostensibly for their safety or for construction of roads and barracks and little or no compensation was paid.³⁹ In some instances, military constructions interfered with agricultural work, for example, in West Godavari District, the Home Department noted that 5,000 acres of farmland irrigated by canal water 'perished for want of water as the level of water in the channels had to be kept low ... for facilitating the execution of some military works'.⁴⁰ On the whole, the countryside was deeply affected by the war and hence rural unrest.

That leads us to the fifth factor in rising public resentment: economic distress caused by war operations. We have many government reports on the destruction of boats and bicycles in the provinces of Madras, Bengal, and some parts of the north-eastern region. This was part of the policy of denial of means of transport to an invading army. An unintended consequence of this was disruption of the marketing network distributing agricultural commodities, specially foodgrains. The result was scarcity of foodgrains in some areas and over-stocking in other areas for want of transport and hence loss to farmers and merchants. That alone can explain the frequent reports of shortage of wheat in Punjab and of rice in Bengal during a year of normal rainfall. Second, the engagement of railway wagons for military purposes impeded crop movements. Finally, the export of foodgrains reduced the quantum available for internal consumption. These three factors caused food shortage in both rural and urban areas. As early as February 1942, Punjab reported that the total 'visible stock' in the province was insufficient to supply the normal requirements of the local civil population till the new crop became available at the end of April or the beginning of May. In addition, 'heavy demand from the military has to be met' and there was further demand from Delhi and the North-West Frontier Province.⁴¹ Towards the end of March 1942, the government admitted in the Central Legislative Assembly that there was shortage of wheat in the market but it was claimed that there was a potential reserve stock in the hoarded wheat which had gone underground. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* questioned the government for allowing export which must 'seriously interfere with the needs of the civil population'.⁴² In Bengal there were as yet no premonitions of the impending famine of 1943. However, there were apprehensions of decline in rice production, partly due to the seizure and destruction of boats. In east Bengal, this affected not only marketing but cultivation as well. The Home Department noted: '[I]n some parts of the province, notably in those producing some of the heaviest yields of paddy, cultivation will be rendered extremely difficult, if not in some cases virtually impossible, without the boats on which the cultivators entirely depend for moving about'.⁴³ Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Harijan*: 'To deprive the people of East Bengal of their boats is like cutting off a vital limb.'⁴⁴ In April 1942 the government officials admit that in Bengal rice, salt, and kerosene were becoming

³⁹ Prafulla Chandra Ghosh's Report on the Evacuation from the Different Districts of Bengal, Calcutta, 24 April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 76.

⁴⁰ Crop Failure, Rise in Food Prices and Misbehaviour by Troops: Extracts from Fortnightly Report for Madras, Second Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 83.

⁴¹ Wheat Shortage in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab, First Half of February 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 10.

⁴² Export of Foodgrains and Other Factors Contributing to Scarcity, 26 March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 52.

⁴³ Hardships Caused by the 'Denial' Policy: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal, Second Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 87.

⁴⁴ M.K. Gandhi on Scorched Earth Policy Again, Sevagram, 27 April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 90.

scarce and expensive and cloth shops were closing down.⁴⁵ Bengal used to export fine rice and depend partially on cheaper Burma rice. Now the rice supply from Burma was cut off. Likewise, in Kerala, about one-third of the rice consumed used to be Burma rice and after cessation of rice supply from war-affected Burma, the Kerala PCC feared disorder if that gap in supply was not taken care of.⁴⁶ It is to be noted that the big cities of Calcutta or Bombay did not suffer so much because of the wartime rationing system and the special provisions supplied by factories to their employees. But in the small towns and the countryside, we see many reports of food shortage.

To sum it up, in the first half of 1942, there was increasing turbulence in different parts of India due to (a) decline in public confidence in the stability of the government and its ability to withstand Japanese invasion after defeat in Malaya, Singapore, and Burma; (b) adverse reaction to the government's 'scorched earth' policy causing loss of assets and disruption to transport and commerce; (c) proneness of the industrial working class to go on strike or to flee the city to disappear into the countryside; (d) occasional disruption of law and order, specially in rural areas, and rumours of breakdown of the government or the prospect of it; and (e) economic distress caused by wartime price inflation and scarcity of foodgrains due to export, military consumption, and transport problems caused by destruction of boats on the Bay of Bengal coastline and military demand for railway wagons.

Division within the Indian National Congress

In foregrounding the situation of turmoil and the crisis of confidence in the government in the public mind, we have till now neglected what was happening in the Congress. However, this was a deliberate choice on our part in order to emphasize the fact that the situation in the first half of 1942 described above foreshadows the course of events in the Quit India Movement, which saw immense spontaneous popular participation. Though that situation was not the creation of the Indian National Congress (INC), it prepared the ground for the Congress's political intervention. In the first half of 1942, the INC does not appear to be ready for significant political action: the party was yet to make up its mind. Sections within the Congress in the early days of 1942 dithered ridiculously to come to decisions. For example, on 17–18 March at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting at Wardha, the following was the resolution on the question of evacuation: 'We should neither encourage nor impede evacuations.'⁴⁷ Members 'individually expressed their opinion', no resolution emerged, when 'the attention of the Committee was drawn to the possibility of the Government adopting a scorched earth policy.... The Committee took no decision on the subject.' Dithering to this extent indicated deep divisions within the Congress stemming from different perceptions of the war situation and the approach of the authorities in London, chiefly the government led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

The Congress was united on the basic objective of independence and yet it was divided on the question of choice of strategy at this juncture. The Congress seemed to be a forum of diverse opinions. In this brief preface, there is no space for a blow-by-blow narrative of the

⁴⁵ Food and Cloth Shortage: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal, Second Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 91.

⁴⁶ Extract from Report of Kerala Provincial Congress Committee about Food Scarcity and Panic in Moplah Areas, 13 March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 32.

⁴⁷ Wardha CWC Resolution on Refugees and Evacuees, 17–18 March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 54.

expression and eventual resolution of these differences in the course of events from the Bardoli decision of December 1941 and the 'Quit India' resolution of 8 August 1942; the able editors of this volume have provided that narrative in their introduction. One gathers the impression from the documents compiled here that in the welter of resolutions and amendments at the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee (AICC) meetings, the flood of expostulation in letters between the top leaders, and the profusion of political advice solicited and offered by Congressmen, the essential picture that emerges is that within the Congress there were three parallel streams of strategic thinking in the first half of 1942. Mahatma Gandhi's followers, insistently emphasizing the principle of non-violence, differed from Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad who questioned the prioritization of non-violence in the context of the ongoing war and the threat of Japanese aggression. A third stream of opinion was led by Chakravarti Rajagopalachari who differed from both the above schools of thought in proposing that no resistance to Japanese invasion was possible without coordination with the defence measures of the Government of India and, further, that acknowledgement of the Muslim League's claim for separation was necessary as a necessary evil compared to the political costs of continuing opposition to it. The differences emerged clearly for the first time in early May 1942 and they will be clear if we look at three documents. The first is the draft resolution composed by Mahatma Gandhi: '[T]he British should withdraw from India ... for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety'; in the event of Japanese invasion, the INC would advise Indian people to offer 'complete non-violent non-cooperation to the Japanese forces'. Further, Gandhi recommended that the INC should resolve 'to assure the Japanese sentiment and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or to any other nation'.⁴⁸ There followed exhortations to the Congress to devote itself to a constructive programme in respect of poverty, untouchability, communalism, and so on. On the other hand, Nehru's draft of 1 May 1942 says that Congress 'has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Fascism and Nazism as to imperialism..... In case an invasion takes place it must be resisted. Such a resistance can only take form of nonviolent non-cooperation as the British government has prevented the organization of national defence by the people in any other way.'⁴⁹ Thus, in Nehru's draft, which was passed eventually, non-violence is not recognized as the principle, and the inability imposed by the government on the disarmed population of India is emphasized. C. Rajagopalachari took a third position, in condemning 'passivity during invasion by an enemy power' and in pointing out that it was not 'practicable to organize an effective defence, independently and uncoordinated with the defence measures of the government'.⁵⁰ Moreover, he departed from the Congress position in a major matter in advising the Congress to concede the Muslim League's claim for separation: '[I]t has become necessary to ... acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation.'

Arguably, the key to an explanation of the complexities of Congress politics in this period is to focus on the three distinctly different positions outlined above. In early May 1942, at the AICC meeting in Allahabad, the differences were starkly revealed but, even earlier, a similar division was perceptible between the Gandhian and Nehruvian groups in the Congress. In December 1941, at the Working Committee meeting in Bardoli, Gandhi felt that he was in a

⁴⁸ M.K. Gandhi's Draft for Working Committee's Resolution, 24 April 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 12.

⁴⁹ Confidential Draft of the War Resolution by Jawaharlal Nehru for the Working Committee, Allahabad, 1 May 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 22.

⁵⁰ The Resolutions Proposed by the Madras Congress Committee for the AICC Meeting, Undated, Chapter 12, Document No. 14.

minority for 'most members differed from my interpretation' and opposition to participation in any manner in the war they believed 'need not be on the ground of non-violence'.⁵¹ Gandhi wrote to Maulana Azad: 'Please relieve me of the responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay resolution' and he declared that he would continue his civil disobedience 'against all war' with the aid of Congressmen 'who believe in the non-violence I have contemplated'.⁵² Maulana Azad and the Working Committee acceded to the request forthwith.⁵³ Thus, Nehru's view prevailed for the time being. When the Bardoli Resolution was placed before the AICC at its meeting in Wardha on 15–16 March 1942,⁵⁴ Gandhi maintained his moral position regarding non-violence, but conceded that as a political position the Nehruvian line was acceptable in the then circumstances. This was the occasion when he declared that Nehru would be his successor.⁵⁵

The acceptance of the Bardoli Resolution by the AICC at Wardha was accompanied by an equally important set of decisions regarding rebuilding the party organization.⁵⁶ Lost in the details of Congress re-organization, the Independence Day, the National Week, and so on, is the central fact that after the phase of 'individual Satyagraha' of the recent past, Congress was now enabled to take up the political challenge of the situation created by the prospect of Japanese invasion and the civil disorder and turbulence noted above. Was there a possibility that the national leadership was prepared to offer an alternative government? In some parts of India, during the Quit India Movement, a parallel government called *prati-sarkar* (counter-authority or government), *jatiya sarkar* (national authority or government), and such like, came into existence in some parts of India, for example, in present-day Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Were there anticipations of a parallel government under national auspices? Congressmen's public speeches focused on the failure of the Allied army and the precarious situation faced by the government. Even in the heart of Delhi, in public meetings in the Queen's Garden, they spoke derisively of the 'withdrawal of the British, according to plan, from Hongkong, Penang and Singapore'.⁵⁷ And we have noticed the diminishing public confidence in the staying-power of the government. But to replace the British Indian government was a question of a different order. In their letter to all Provincial Congress Conferences on 24 March 1942, the AICC spoke of the threat of 'internal civil disorder' and need for 'self-protection and self-sufficiency'. 'Our previous volunteer organizations ... were confined to Congressmen. This time we have thrown open the doors of the organization to all our countrymen irrespective of political affiliation ...'⁵⁸ It was as if the Congress invited all to be citizens of a parallel system of governance. In the Congress plans in this regard in April 1942, the overwhelming emphasis was

⁵¹ M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bardoli, 30 December 1941, Asking to Be Relieved of Responsibility Placed on Him Earlier, Chapter 1, Document No. 8.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Maulana Azad's Letter to M.K. Gandhi, 30 December 1941, Relieving Him of the Responsibility of the Congress, Chapter 1, Document No. 9.

⁵⁴ T.B. Sapru's Letter to Jagdish Prasad on Who among the Non-party People Should Meet Sir Stafford Cripps, and on M.A. Jinnah and Hindu Mahasabha, 17 March 1942, and other letters, Chapter 3, Document Nos 24–34.

⁵⁵ Excerpts from M.K. Gandhi's Speech at the AICC Meeting, Introducing the Bardoli Resolution, 15 January 1942, Chapter 1, Document No. 26.

⁵⁶ Congress Working Committee Instructions regarding Future Course of Action, and subsequent documents, Chapter 1, Document Nos 45–73.

⁵⁷ Nervousness in Delhi and 'Kuchabandi'; Strong Feeling against 'Scorched Earth', Second Half of March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 47.

⁵⁸ Need for Self-protection and Self-sufficiency: AICC Circular No. 8, 24 March 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 56.

on peaceful method and not on takeover of government. At this stage there were only isolated instances of political leaders, inside or outside the Congress, speaking of guerilla warfare.⁵⁹ Till July 1942 the Congress was willing to cooperate with government agencies: for instance, the Maharashtra PCC, the Bombay Municipal Congress Party, and the Mahakoshala PCC desired participation in Food Committees organized by the government.⁶⁰ There were instances where people preferred to join the Congress and its volunteer bodies than the volunteer forces for Air Raid Protection raised by the government.⁶¹ In a speech near Calcutta on 19 April 1942, speaking of the Congress Programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection, Nehru said: '[I]f the administration at any time breaks down, specially in the countryside, the people themselves will have the opportunity to take up the responsibility of running the government.'⁶² In saying so, Jawaharlal Nehru was exceptional among Congressmen in addressing the issue of running the government.

While the Congress was thus negotiating a difficult phase in its career, trying to resolve internal differences, a new challenge was posed by a stratagem of Winston Churchill. His intervention took the form of the dispatch of the Cripps Mission, carrying a proposal from the War Cabinet. This episode has been covered in the longest chapter in this volume, with 237 documents spread over three hundred pages.

The Cripps Mission: A Ruse in Wartime Diplomacy

What was the Cripps mission about? It was meant to be an abortive enterprise by its authors. It is a standard practice in warfare to create an impression that action will be taken on one front while the real action is intended to be in quite another. The British War Cabinet, under the stress caused by successive defeats in south-east Asia and Japan's advance into Burma, was forced to adopt this ruse to satisfy those who regarded India's case for self-government worthy of attention. The latter opinion acquired importance because President Roosevelt held this view and Britain at this juncture depended heavily on American support. There can be little doubt that Prime Minister Churchill's main objective in sending Cripps was to deceive his American ally and the ruse worked. The world and indeed the Congress and the Muslim League believed that Britain's offer in the form of the Cripps proposals failed because it was rejected by Indian leaders, though the British prime minister and the viceroy of India had actually set up a charade that they conducted towards predestined failure.

This interpretation of the Cripps Mission as a part of war diplomacy and the duplicity in it, is borne out by documents in this volume and in Nicholas Mansergh's collection, *Transfer of Power*. The latter contains data on President Roosevelt's concerns. He was unhappy in January 1942 with Churchill's dismissive attitude towards Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's approach to Churchill proposing an Indian national government. And again on 6 March 1942 the Canadian prime minister, Mackenzie King, conveyed to Churchill Roosevelt's continuing concern, as

⁵⁹ B.S. Moonje on Guerilla Warfare, 13 May 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 111.

⁶⁰ From General Secretary, Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee to General Secretary, AICC: Province in Grip of Severe Famine, 20 June 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 130; Resolution Passed at Bombay PCC Meeting—Re: Situation Arising Out of the Abnormal Rise in the Prices of Foodstuffs and Other Essential Commodities, 17 July 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 131.

⁶¹ Public Uneasiness, Fear of Further Bombardments, First Half of April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 71.

⁶² Jawaharlal Nehru's Address to Workers of the Howrah District Congress Committee Office, 19 April 1942, Chapter 11, Document No. 88.

well as similar opinion from the Canadian government and from Chiang Kai-shek.⁶³ On 11 March 1942, Roosevelt in his first meeting with the Agent General of the Indian Government, Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, decided to make the subject of conversation the question how to bring the Indian people into the fight with the Japanese, in the manner grant of independence to Philippines secured Filipino people's participation.⁶⁴ Churchill's colleague Amery noted on the same day in his letter to Viceroy Linlithgow the 'pressure outside upon Winston [Churchill] from Roosevelt, and upon Attlee & Co. from their own party'.⁶⁵ Roosevelt was so deeply concerned with Indian affairs, and possibly with Churchill's inadequate responses, that he gave charge to the erstwhile Assistant Secretary of War, Colonel Louis Johnson, to help in the discussions the Cripps mission initiated in India.⁶⁶ Further, President Roosevelt wrote to Churchill a warning message: 'It is impossible for American public opinion to understand why, if there is willingness on the part of the British government to permit component parts of India to secede after the war from the British Empire, it is unwilling to permit them to enjoy during the war what is tantamount to self-government.'⁶⁷ Newspapers in the USA editorialized on the possible role of the USA as a guarantor of the promises made by Britain so that America will have on their side the Indian people in the fight against Japan.⁶⁸ Churchill's responses to the pressure of international opinion were inadequate because of the innate duplicity of his effort to present to the world the Cripps mission as a genuine effort to resolve the Indian problem. He wrote to Roosevelt about the impediments to acting fast on the issue of self-government; these impediments were, he claimed, Britain's commitment to the Muslim population in India, to the princely states, and the backward castes.⁶⁹ Viceroy Linlithgow confided to Churchill his doubts about the relevance of international opinion.⁷⁰ He wanted to impress on the world the Indian leaders' intransigence. When the Cripps talks began to falter and fail, the US newspapers appeared to be converted to the view that Indian leaders' intransigence was indeed the cause of failure, precisely the impression Churchill wanted to create. Roosevelt's personal representative, Colonel Louis A. Johnson, carried a message to New Delhi that the president was deeply interested in the Cripps negotiations and there are documents showing that the Government of India was compelled to take notice of Johnson.⁷¹ The pressure of international opinion, specially that of Roosevelt, was not fully known to the Indian nationalist leadership; documents in that regard became public long after the war. Nehru, who was among the leaders

⁶³ Churchill to Roosevelt, 4 March 1942, and Mackenzie King to Churchill, 6 March 1942, in N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, vol. I, pp. 310–12, 350.

⁶⁴ G.S. Bajpai to Lord Linlithgow, 11 March 1942, in N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, vol. I, p. 415.

⁶⁵ L.S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, in N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, vol. I, p. 404.

⁶⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote to Viceroy Linlithgow on 19 March 1942 in this regard. See N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, vol. I, p. 445.

⁶⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, 12 April 1942, in N. Mansergh, ed., *Transfer of Power*, vol. I, p. 759.

⁶⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru's Interview to the Press Replying to Comments in the American Press, 4 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 94.

⁶⁹ Winston Churchill's Telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt Considering Granting the Right of Secession to Muslims, Princes, and Untouchables, 4 March 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 11; Winston Churchill's Telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Paraphrasing M.A. Jinnah's Telegram to Him Questioning the Representative Capacity of the Sapru Conference and Asserting the Demand for Pakistan, 4 March 1942, Chapter 3, Document 12.

⁷⁰ Notes by Lord Linlithgow of His Meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps on the American Connection and Some Contradictions between HMG and Viceroy, also the Cripps-Johnson Formula, 8 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 64.

⁷¹ Notes of Jawaharlal Nehru's Interview with Louis Arthur Johnson (as Prepared by O.K. Caroe, Secretary, External Department, Government of India), Chapter 3, Document No. 96.

most alert to international developments, held discussions with Johnson.⁷² Johnson's role was important in suggesting a formula in respect of defence responsibility to resolve differences between the Cripps proposal and Indian demands. But what made the failure of negotiations inevitable on the British side was the non-cooperation of Linlithgow and Churchill's decision to scuttle it once the objective of impressing Roosevelt with Britain's good intentions was achieved.

Linlithgow fought with Cripps on the ground that in talking to Congress about the Johnson formula behind the viceroy's back, Cripps had exceeded his brief.⁷³ In a beautifully coordinated manner, on the very same day, India Office issued a memo supporting Linlithgow's position, Prime Minister Churchill cabled Cripps warning him not to make any commitment to Congress, and the War Cabinet questioned in a cable Cripps's authority to bypass Viceroy Linlithgow and Commander-in-Chief Wavell. Churchill's cable to Cripps on 10 April 1942 was the final action to abort the negotiations and virtually to reprimand Cripps. Churchill said that 'it was agreed between us that there were not to be negotiations but that you were to try to gain acceptance [of the Cabinet proposals] with possible minor variations or elaboration of our great offer which has made so powerful an impression here and throughout the United States'.⁷⁴ It was indeed a fine distinction Churchill made between the latter operation and negotiation. The purpose of making that distinction was to show the prime minister's lack of confidence in Cripps. It was also, for Churchill, a means of eliminating a potential political rival, Sir Stafford Cripps. On the same day, 10 April, a disheartened Cripps wrote to the War Cabinet: 'Unless I am trusted I cannot carry on with the task.'⁷⁵ Upon getting Churchill's cable, Cripps wrote back saying he would return to England forthwith. In the public statement he made on the eve of his departure, Cripps told the Indian public that the War Cabinet's proposals were 'rejected by your leaders'.⁷⁶ Documents published later reveal the inner story of Churchill's anxiety to satisfy the president of the USA and a readiness to give up the Cripps mission as a fiasco.

The fiasco was *ab initio* foreordained in the War Cabinet proposals that Cripps carried in his brief case.⁷⁷ It was not expected that the Congress would concede partition on communal lines, that either Congress or the League would be happy with the potential of Balkanization in the provision that provinces would have the right to secede, or that any one in India would rejoice that all proposals were to be implemented only after cessation of hostilities, that is, after the Second World War. It was indeed bizarre that so much attention was given to the Cripps mission, as is evident in the numerous letters exchanged, in the discussion of minutiae of defence arrangements, in negotiations started and left incomplete. However, it is of interest to us to see that in all these manoeuvres, the tripartite division within the Congress, which we

⁷² Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Col. Johnson Commenting on the Alternative Schemes Discussed at Their Meeting, and Adding that India's Independent Status Needs to Be Recognized by the United Nations, 8 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 97.

⁷³ Notes by Lord Linlithgow of His Meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps on the American Connection and Some Contradictions between HMG and Viceroy, also the Cripps-Johnson Formula, 8 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 64.

⁷⁴ Winston Churchill's Telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps Restraining Him Further and Asserting That His Job in India Was Not to Negotiate a New Proposal but to Try and Gain Acceptance for the Existing Proposal, 10 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 70.

⁷⁵ Sir Stafford Cripps's Telegram to War Cabinet Putting Forward a Defence of His Formula, Removing Doubts, and Offering to Quit the Job If Doubts Persisted, 10 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 69.

⁷⁶ Broadcast by Sir Stafford Cripps on the Eve of His Departure, Defending the Proposals, Regretting the Failure of the Mission and Taking Responsibility For It, 11 April 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 72.

⁷⁷ Draft Declaration (Cripps Mission) of The Proposals for Discussion with Indian Leaders, 30 March 1942, Chapter 3, Document No. 2.

noted earlier, was evident once again. Gandhi and his group rejected the War Cabinet proposal right in the beginning. Nehru and Maulana Azad took the proposal seriously enough to engage in negotiations with Cripps, though in the middle of that the unacceptable features mentioned above surfaced inevitably. And Chakravarti Rajagopalachari remained till the end hopeful that here was a window opening the possibility of a pragmatic approach to the defence of India, in place of idealistic phrases about non-violence. To their credit, the leaders of these sections did not focus on their differences during the Cripps negotiations but they emerged in the public discourse after the collapse of the Cripps Mission.

Ironically, an unintended consequence of the Cripps Mission fiasco was to help the Congress to gain some measure of unity. It revealed the government in its true colours. The uniform reaction to it within the Congress was that the end of the road had been reached and further negotiation with the government was neither possible nor necessary. However, to convert that reaction into political action, negotiations within the Congress were necessary to resolve the differences in approach we have noted earlier.

Towards Resolving Differences and Unity in Action

In an earlier part of this preface, we anticipated the story of the crisis in Congress in the three months preceding the Quit India Movement. We saw that at the AICC meeting in Allahabad on 1 May 1942, the crisis took the final form of three rival drafts of the political resolution. The draft resolutions prepared by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, as we have noted, prominently flagged differences in approach to the issue of non-violence, while C. Rajagopalachari's resolution, accepted by the Congress's Madras Legislature Party, differed from both of the above in fundamental matters. And yet, by the first week of August 1942, on the eve of declaring the commencement of the Quit India Movement, the Indian National Congress had resolved the differences between the Gandhian and Nehruvian groups in the All India Congress Committee and thus the Congress stood united.

The question is: What enabled the Congress to bring about a coalescence of these two streams of opinion? That is the main story line in the last two hundred pages of this collection of documents. In the month of April 1942, the distance between Nehru and Gandhi was great. In April, Nehru advised people, in the event of a Japanese invasion, to resort to scorched earth tactics and guerilla warfare; that approach, Gandhi wrote to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, was 'terrible'.⁷⁸ The priority of non-violence as a principle was heavily emphasized by Gandhi in his draft resolution for the Allahabad session of the CWC. He expressed his displeasure to Jawaharlal: 'Whereas we have always had differences of opinion, it appears to me now we also differ in practice.'⁷⁹ He wrote in a distinctly chilling manner to Maulana Azad, who supported Nehru's position, declining to attend the Allahabad meeting. In addition, he conferred with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and J.B. Kripalani and Rajendra Prasad, his chief supporters. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Shankar Rao Deo were also on his side. Despite all this, Gandhi's draft resolution was not approved by the AICC at Allahabad. Nehru's draft was adopted, with minor modifications, and Gandhi advised some of his followers to resign membership of the Working Committee. (Rajagoplachari, who did not have many supporters among Congressmen to begin

⁷⁸ M.K. Gandhi to Vallabhbhai Patel about Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech, 13 April 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 1.

⁷⁹ M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru about the Differences between the Two of Them, 15 April 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 4.

with, withdrew from the scene with a polite resignation letter to President Maulana Azad, but continued to enjoy the moral support of so-called liberal and conservative nationalists of ancient vintage.) Gandhi was not satisfied with the concession made in the AICC resolution that resistance to an invasion 'can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation'. Those words were followed by a qualification suggesting that non-violence was a consequence of the fact that 'the British government has prevented the organization of national defence by the people in any other way'; that diminished the weight of the non-violence principle. However, neither Mahatma Gandhi nor Jawaharlal Nehru allowed their overall vision to be obscured by the dust raised in controversies at Allahabad, the flurry of resignation letters, or threats of resignation.

In this respect, the Cripps Mission played an important role as a catalyst. It seems that the fiasco, the charade of negotiation put up by the War Cabinet to impress President Roosevelt and, upon completion of that objective, the promptitude with which the mission was aborted, leaving the Congress leaders high and dry, was seen by the latter as the final closure. The AICC at Allahabad put on record their view: '[T]he experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, the British control and authority in India.... Britain must abandon her hold on India.'⁸⁰ Maulana Azad put it even more clearly: the Cripps Mission 'had succeeded in changing our attitude to the fundamental issue, that only a Free India can defend herself.'⁸¹ Asaf Ali, a staunch supporter of the Nehruvian position, said at the AICC: 'The proposals [of Cripps] were not sincerely meant and were intended merely to put up a façade before the world.'⁸² And Gandhi said in June 1942 after the Cripps fiasco: 'The original idea of asking the British to go, burst upon me. It was the Cripps fiasco that inspired the idea.... We had heard good things about Cripps from Jawaharlal [a reference to his friendship with Cripps] and others. Yet the whole mission fell flat. How, I asked myself, am I to remedy this situation? The presence of the British blocks our way.... I knew I had to act.'⁸³ Thus, there emerged in Gandhi's mind, after the Cripps episode, the simple idea of demanding that the British should quit India forthwith.

This strategy united the young and radical Nehruvians and the senior and conservative Gandhian sections of Congress leadership. (I may add that there was an issue of inter-generational change in leadership in the conflict of views we have noticed, but I hesitate to over-emphasize such a simple-minded explanation.) That simple idea Gandhi put forward, that the British should leave forthwith, seemed to acquire a life of its own. That idea eventually gave birth to the plan of a mass movement to demand that the British should leave India. Gandhi took care to say that 'I want to carry the whole of the Congress with me' and he announced his intention to discuss the plans with Nehru and Azad.⁸⁴ However, before Nehru and Azad could react to it, Gandhi's idea began to circulate in newspapers, which were reporting, 'Gandhi

⁸⁰ Final Resolution Passed by the AICC on 1 May 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 23.

⁸¹ Newspaper Report on the AICC Session at Allahabad, 30 April 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 21.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Excerpts from Louis Fischer's Interview with M.K. Gandhi about British Withdrawal, 5–8 June 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 64.

⁸⁴ M.K. Gandhi's Interview to *The Hindu*, 28 May 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 50.

planning launch mass movement'.⁸⁵ The Home Department of the Indian government had reports that a 'mass civil disobedience movement' was on his agenda and 'this time the fight will be to the finish' and he 'would leave the struggle to individual members of the Congress'.⁸⁶ And with a view to starting the mass movement first in Gujarat, he was reportedly discussing the immediate plans with the Gujarat PCC.⁸⁷ The outcome on the whole was that Gandhi had outflanked his critics within the Congress. By 20 June 1942, a month after the Allahabad session of the AICC, Gandhi is already talking of the shape of things to come if the British Indian government ceases to be.⁸⁸ He specified in *Harijan* how people should take over from the British Indian government the details of governance, for example, food supply, evacuation, stopping salt tax, dealing with 'misbehaviors' of foreign troops, and so on.⁸⁹ Gandhi also wrote to Roosevelt explaining his position: 'The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission has opened our eyes.... [T]he British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India withdraw their rule.' He also made a concession to Nehru's position: 'If the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops ... not for keeping internal order, but for preventing Japanese aggression....'⁹⁰

In July 1942, Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Nehru and the CWC on the other, were trying their utmost to reach a *via media*. To meet Gandhi's convenience the CWC met at Wardha. Nehru's confidential draft proposal was shown to Gandhi, who wrote back: 'I note that you have tried to include some of my points.... It will not be good if we speak in different voices.'⁹¹ The draft approved by Gandhi was the version accepted by the CWC on 14 July 1942.⁹² Gandhi went to the length of suggesting that if Maulana Azad continued to oppose the compromise—'the two of us have drifted apart'—'the Maulana should relinquish Presidentship' of the Congress.⁹³ The major concession Gandhi made was presented artfully by Nehru as an explanation obtained from Gandhi: '[W]hen the question of British withdrawal from India was considered, I pointed out that if the [British] armed forces were suddenly withdrawn, the Japanese might well advance and invade the country without hindrance. This obvious difficulty was removed when Gandhiji later explained that British and other forces might remain to prevent aggression.'⁹⁴ The final CWC resolution, Gandhi said at the end of the Wardha meeting, showed that the Working Committee had been 'most considerate' and 'tried to accommodate me as much as they could and therefore I must be entirely satisfied.... When you are working in a committee you cannot have it all your own way. Therefore you have to compromise.'⁹⁵ That spirit of compromise made it possible to reconcile the differences

⁸⁵ The Resolutions Proposed by the Madras Congress Committee for the AICC Meeting, Undated, Chapter 12, Document No. 14.

⁸⁶ M.K. Gandhi's Visit to Bombay: Fortnightly Report for Bombay, Second Half of May, Chapter 12, Document No. 51.

⁸⁷ Urgent Meeting of E.C. of Gujarat PCC: Fortnightly Report for Bombay, Second half of May 1942, Chapter 12, Document 53.

⁸⁸ M.K. Gandhi's Proposals for Withdrawal of British Troops from India, 22 June 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 91.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1 July 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 99.

⁹¹ M.K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru about the War Resolution, 13 July 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 112.

⁹² Final Quit India Resolution Passed by CWC, 14 July 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 114.

⁹³ M.K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru about the War Resolution, 13 July 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 112.

⁹⁴ Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Press, Bombay, 5 August 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 187.

⁹⁵ M.K. Gandhi's Interview to the Press regarding the CWC Resolution and the Nature of the Movement to Come, 14 July 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 116.

that existed earlier. Gandhi now appeared to be far ahead of those Congressmen who differed from his position on 1 May 1942 at the Allahabad session of the AICC. Once again he was the unquestionable leader.

That was the background to the AICC meeting which adopted the Quit India resolution on 8 August 1942. The operative part of the 'Quit India' resolution passed by AICC on 8 August 1942 was 'to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale.... A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions to reach our people.... When this happens, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instruction issued.'⁹⁶ Mahatma Gandhi was also requested to 'take the lead and guide the nation'. Gandhi made in his speech to the AICC an important statement touching on the position of the Muslim League: 'The Hindus and Mussalmans must unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom.... Freedom cannot wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed.'⁹⁷ Here the Mahatma was probably already looking far ahead to the partition of 1947. This speech of Gandhi's was a remarkable one in that it summed up his political philosophy from the days of the Khilafat Movement to the crisis of 1942 when the Cripps Mission revealed the imperialist strategy of using the communal issue as a rationale for the closure of the dialogue with the Congress. On the whole, his speech and the AICC resolution created a climate of opinion that contained an expectation of a great struggle, but there remained a possibility of discussion with the viceroy. Gandhi expected that before the movement broke out, there would be 'two or three weeks' to parley with the viceroy. He declared that the 'actual struggle does not commence this moment'.⁹⁸

At the same time, there was no doubt that what was in the offing was a movement different in kind from the preceding ones led by Gandhi. It will be evident to a careful reader of these documents that in Gandhi's other statements in the early half of 1942, there is evidence of rethinking on his part. Not only did he allow strike by the labouring classes as a political weapon (he had earlier considered political strikes as action contrary to the principle of non-violence), but he also began to qualify the nature of resistance to violence. Talking about British troops reportedly molesting Indian women and men, he said in June 1942: 'People must everywhere learn to defend themselves against misbehaving individuals, no matter who they are. The question of non-violence and violence does not arise. No doubt the non-violent way is always best, but where that does not come naturally the violent way is both necessary and honorable. Inaction here is rank cowardice and unmanly.'⁹⁹ It is not surprising that the secretary of state for India reported to the War Cabinet: '[I]n recent utterances Gandhi says that he and Nehru and have drawn closer together of late,' and 'we must be prepared for a movement instigated by Gandhi to defy the law of the land'.¹⁰⁰ In fact, in his interview with Louis Fischer, Gandhi had revealed plans that anticipated the actual course of developments in the Quit India struggle

⁹⁶ Resolution Passed by the All India Congress Committee, Bombay, 8 August 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 208.

⁹⁷ M.K. Gandhi's Speech at AICC Meeting, 8 August 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 205.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ M.K. Gandhi's Proposals for Withdrawal of British Troops from India, 22 June 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 91.

¹⁰⁰ Policy to Be Adopted towards M.K. Gandhi: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India, 16 June 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 83.

after 9 August 1942. 'In the villages the peasants will stop paying taxes.... The next step will be to seize the land [belonging to landlords]. There may be violence, but again the landlords may cooperate.... Working men in the factories would leave their factories. The railroads will stop running.'¹⁰¹ That seemed to be the template for many instructions issued by different agencies in the Congress. A typical example was the programme for action issued by the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, containing instructions for 'cutting off all telephone and telegraph wires.... Not to pay land tax, salt tax, etc.... To run parallel government in competition with British government.'¹⁰² It is fruitless to speculate what might have happened if a viceroy less obdurate than Linlithgow had been in charge. The decision taken by the Government of India to put under arrest almost the entire Congress leadership precipitated the outbreak of a mass struggle on 9 August 1942.

To sum it up, we began with the question: How do we account for the Quit India Movement, which, in terms of its scale and its characteristics, stands apart among the political movements from 1919 onwards? To economize on space and to avoid repeating what the able editors of this volume have already said, we have focused only on that question and on the central events and processes, although there is much of interest in many documents in this volume relating to many other political agencies on the Left and the Right. We first looked at the evidence we have in the documents in this volume regarding popular mentality. We saw that between January and July 1942, in reaction to the defeat of the British forces in Malay, Singapore, and Burma, there was a marked lack of public confidence in the stability of the British Indian government. Not only were there rumours and panic but the 'scorched earth policy' of the government meant actual destruction of people's assets and disruption to trade and mobility. Panic also meant large-scale evacuation from cities and instability of industrial labour. Above all, there was economic distress caused by wartime inflation, scarcity of food grains due to military demand, and diversion of railway wagons for military purposes. Thus, there was a general situation of civil disorder and intensification of anti-government sentiments. We have highlighted that state of popular mentality because this helps explain the unique characteristic of the Quit India Movement, a high degree of spontaneity and scale of popular participation. That state of popular mentality and a climate of turbulence made a movement like Quit India possible. However, whatever is possible does not always happen in history. The Congress's ability to transform popular discontentment into a political movement was hampered by differences within the party in respect of political perceptions and strategies to be followed. There were three distinct parallel streams of political thinking and, hence, three different segments in the Congress. There were differences between the sections led by Mahatma Gandhi and by Jawaharlal Nehru with respect to prioritization of non-violence as a principle, and again there were differences between both of them and the approach of C. Rajagopalachari who recommended a pragmatic acceptance of the need to participate in the government's defence measures against Japanese invasion and acknowledgement of the Muslim League's claim for separation. In the interest of brevity and in order to avoid duplication of the narrative already provided by the able editors of this volume, we have focused on the centre stage and not on those to the Left and to the Right, non-Congress players who were, for the present, in the margins. While Congressmen were

¹⁰¹ Excerpts from Louis Fischer's Interview with M.K. Gandhi about British Withdrawal, 5–8 June 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 64.

¹⁰² The Andhra Circular: Translation of Cyclostyled Telegu Pamphlet Issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, Undated, Chapter 12, Document No. 209.

negotiating between the alternatives posed by Gandhi, Nehru, and Rajagopalachari, Prime Minister Winston Churchill's intervention in the shape of the Cripps Mission formed a curious episode. Arguably, it was no more than a charade to satisfy President Roosevelt, an ally on whom Churchill and the War Cabinet were totally dependent at that time. Though the mission was a fiasco, as Churchill and Viceroy Linlithgow desired, it served as a catalyst in uniting the Congress, for no one was left with hopes in further negotiation after the Cripps Mission, nor was there any option to a united uncompromising fight for the withdrawal of the British from India as proposed by Mahatma Gandhi. It was as if an explosion was waiting to happen when the Congress was suddenly decapitated and there began a vast popular upsurge, which had for its watchword the utterance of Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of his arrest on 9 August 1942: 'Everyone is free to go the fullest length under ahimsa. Complete deadlock by strikes and other non-violent means.... *Karengye ya marengye*.'¹⁰³ The story of the struggle that ensued will appear in Part 2 of this volume.

* * *

The present collection of documents, Part 1 of the volume on the year 1942, has been edited by Professor Bipan Chandra, Dr Visalakshi Menon, and Professor Salil Misra. This volume on 1942 was originally assigned to Professor Bipan Chandra by the Council of the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) many years ago and he collected a great deal of the relevant source material, but he passed away before he could complete the work; since his long illness made it difficult for him to engage in the task, the chairman of the ICHR, Professor Basudev Chatterji, and I discussed the matter with him and as a result Professor Chandra's former students, Dr Visalakshi Menon, Associate Professor at Jesus and Mary College, Delhi University, and Professor Salil Misra of the School of Liberal Studies at Ambedkar University, were requested to take up the unfinished task. We are immensely grateful to them for completing Part 1 of the projected volume. Soon after completing her editorial work on the first part of this volume, Dr Visalakshi Menon, after fighting bravely a life-threatening ailment that required organ transplant, passed away. We would like to put on record our tribute to the memory of Professor Bipan Chandra and Dr Visalakshi Menon.

A big project such as this incurs many debts. I would like to thank the present chairman of the ICHR, Professor Y. Sudershan Rao; his predecessor in that office, Professor Basudev Chatterji; the former member-secretary of the ICHR, Professor Ravindran Gopinath; the present incumbent in charge, Dr. S.K. Aruni; as well as the co-ordinator, Professor Arjun Dev, who helped to push forward our efforts to complete the *Towards Freedom* series. Among the editors of the present volume, I would like particularly to acknowledge the role now being played by Professor Salil Misra, on whom the responsibility of producing Part 2 of the volume on 1942 has devolved. As I cast back my mind to the past, I also recall my indebtedness to distinguished fellow-editors in charge of different volumes, other than those mentioned above: Professors Bimal Prasad, K.N. Panikkar, Sumit Sarkar, Mushirul Hasan, Amit Kumar Gupta, Arjun Dev, and Sucheta Mahajan. I would also like to thank the Oxford University Press, New Delhi, for their unstinting cooperation through all these years since 2007.

¹⁰³ M.K. Gandhi's Message to the Country, Bombay, 9 August 1942, Chapter 12, Document No. 211, italics added.

As I mentioned earlier, the data generated by the publishers tell us that from 2007, when this project was effectively revived and I was asked to be the General Editor, till today, the total published output of this project has been as follows: about twelve thousand pages of historical documents, editorial research aids such as calendars of documents, the General Editor's preface, and the introduction by the volume editor, and so on, in ten bulky tomes and three more volumes are ready for the press. In the near future, we expect to have Part 2 of the present volume and that will, at long last, complete the entire *Towards Freedom* series. The statistics of publication are not necessarily significant: these productions are to be evaluated in terms of the extent to which research has been facilitated. That is to be seen in the future, but for the present, it is a matter of some satisfaction that documents hitherto dispersed in many archives and depositories have been made easily accessible and that a project that began three decades ago is nearing completion.

SABYASACHI BHATTACHARYA
General Editor

Editors' Introduction

I

The year 1942 is a defining year in our nation's history. By the end of the year the equation between Britain and India had irreversibly changed. As Jawaharlal Nehru was to put it later, the iron had entered the souls of the Indian people. The mass movement which had been awaited by many since the beginning of the Second World War finally happened in August 1942 and, contrary to the expectations of the British government, it evoked an overwhelming response.

There was no simple trajectory towards the Quit India Movement. The months before it, which this volume covers, were spent in agonizing debates and discussions, misgivings and partings of ways. It was only in the second half of the year, against the backdrop of the Japanese advance and the countless acts of insensitivity on the part of the British government as well as the failure of the Cripps Mission, that Mahatma Gandhi became convinced that the British must leave India.

This volume begins with the Bardoli Resolution of 30 December 1941, passed when the Congress Working Committee (CWC) met after an interlude of 15 months (Chapter 1, Document 6). In order to understand the background to this resolution, which took into account the changed world situation and the coming of the war closer to India, we look at the immediate developments prior to the passing of the resolution (Chapter 1, Documents 1–5). From late October 1941, there seemed to be a change in the attitude of the British government. The Individual Satyagraha prisoners were slowly being released from jail.¹ Mahatma Gandhi called for a meeting of the CWC and the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to decide on the future course of action. Once again, as in the summer of 1940, significant sections of the Congress were beginning to feel that so much emphasis should not be placed on non-violence at this juncture. What was more important was the defence of India, they argued. If the British government were to concede independence, then the country should be willing to take up arms against Japanese aggression. The main proponent of this view was the Congress veteran C. Rajagopalachari, who differed with Mahatma Gandhi on this issue (Chapter 1, Document 1).

The Bardoli Resolution, which expressed its sympathy with those who were the subject of aggression, stated that only a free and independent India would be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and 'be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war' (Chapter 1, Document 6). Mahatma Gandhi's unhappiness with this resolution led him to write to Maulana Azad, the Congress President,

¹ On 3 December 1941, the Government of India made a declaration that all Civil Disobedience prisoners whose offences were of a formal or symbolic nature would be released. On the following day, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad were released.

asking to be relieved of the responsibility that had been placed upon him by the AICC at Bombay on 16 September 1940.² He was distressed that the principle of non-violence was being abandoned just when the movement was so close to attaining its objective (Chapter 1, Document 8). While Jawaharlal Nehru was clear in his preference for freedom over non-violence, other important Congress leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel, J.B. Kripalani, Rajendra Prasad, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan shared Gandhi's agony at the thought of any compromise on the principle of non-violence. They felt that it would be nothing short of a calamity to give up this core value of the Congress at such a crucial juncture. Except for Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, though, they did not carry their misgivings to the extent of resigning from the CWC. This was on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi himself (Chapter 1, Documents 13–16 and 35).

We then go on to look at the reactions to the Bardoli Resolution from various quarters—Indian and British public opinion, the Communists, the Muslim League, and the Hindu communal press. The Muslim League's position, articulated by its leader, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was that the Congress demand for complete independence would result in the establishment of a Hindu Raj which would be detrimental to Muslim interests (Chapter 1, Document 21).

British official reaction to the Bardoli Resolution came in the form of a statement from L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, on 8 January 1942 (Chapter 1, Document 20). The statement, quite predictably, referred to the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League and declared that no progress could be made in India unless these differences were resolved. This statement provoked critical reactions from prominent sections of Indian society.

In the meantime the Liberal leader Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, along with twelve others, had also sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State asking for some bold stroke of statesmanship at this juncture (Chapter 1, Document 22). They suggested the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council into a truly national government and the restoration of popular ministries in the provinces where Section 93 was in force. The reaction to this proposal may be seen in the telegram from British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill to the Secretary of State, in which he stated in no uncertain terms that he had no desire to bring 'hostile elements' like the Congress into the government at this stage (Chapter 1, Document 23).

The Bardoli Resolution of the Working Committee was placed before the AICC when it met at Wardha on 15 January 1942. Maulana Azad, the Congress President, explained the background to the resolution (Chapter 1, Document 25). He repeatedly emphasized that the Congress stand was exactly the same as it was fifteen months ago and that the differences with Gandhi did not imply that he was any less integral to the organization than before. The resolution was then placed before the AICC by Jawaharlal Nehru and seconded by Rajagopalachari. Gandhiji, in a historic yet rather enigmatic speech at this session, began by stating that the resolution was a retrograde step. But, he hastened to add, a step back could be a prelude to stepping forward. He advocated the passing of the resolution in the light of the climate in the country and the criticism of the Congress in the world. He also denied that there was any rift in the Congress and asserted that the differences between him and Jawaharlal Nehru should not be the cause of any concern. He then made the historic declaration that Jawaharlal would be his successor, not Vallabhbhai, nor Rajagopalachari (Chapter 1, Document 26).

² A.M. Zaidi and S.G. Zaidi (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. 12, p. 376.

There were mixed reactions to the passing of the Bardoli Resolution at the Wardha AICC meeting. Within the Left camp, there were clearly divergent views. The Congress Socialist Party (CSP) expressed its alarm at the prospect of India's participation in a war which, in their view, was basically an imperialist one (Chapter 1, Document 31). The Communists, on the other hand, felt that this was no longer a battle of rival imperialisms in which the Congress and the Indian people could remain neutral. It was a 'titanic conflict between the forces of progress and reaction'. In fact, the Communist Party of India (CPI) wanted the AICC to declare its full and wholehearted support to the cause of the Soviet Union, China, and the Allies in order to defeat the forces of fascism. It suggested that the CWC get in touch with the Muslim League and other popular organizations for joint action and the establishment of a national government at the Centre (Chapter 1, Document 32).

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru regretted that the Congress did not have more Rajagopalacharis in it. He felt that Gandhi was becoming more and more enigmatic (Chapter 1, Document 36). The Hindu Mahasabha leader V.D. Savarkar wondered why the British government was refusing to respond to the overtures of the Congress which, in his view, had always been pro-government (Chapter 1, Document 40).

Following the passing of the Bardoli Resolution, the Congress focused on rebuilding the organization, keeping in mind the exigencies of the war situation (Chapter 1, Documents 44–73). The year 1942 was an extremely difficult one, when the steady Japanese advances in the eastern sector were posing a distinct threat to India. Constructive work was seen as being extremely relevant in the given situation. By concentrating on *khadi*, rural industries, and self-sufficiency, the shortages of essential goods that were being felt in different parts of the country could be reduced at least to some extent. Congress members were also asked not to give way to panic and to focus on volunteer activities in order to help the people in times of need (Chapter 1, Document 45).

The Provincial Congress Committees (PCCs) responded to this appeal from the Working Committee with great enthusiasm. Province-wide tours were undertaken by leaders and the Congress President, Maulana Azad, himself set out on a tour of Delhi and the Punjab (Chapter 1, Documents 49–52). Volunteer organizations, known by different names in different provinces, began to be revived. The People's Volunteer Brigade in Bombay, largely under the Congress Socialists, was especially active (Chapter 1, Documents 57 and 59). In Nagpur the Congress volunteer organization was known as the Nagarik Sanrakshak Dal Samiti, in Andhra it was the Santi Sena, and in Punjab, the Qaumi Khidmatgar Dal. From the reports received from the PCCs, it is evident that these volunteer bodies responded very well to their local problems. For instance, volunteer corps in Bengal, Assam, and Orissa helped with the problems of evacuees from Burma, Malaya, and Singapore. They would receive the evacuees, feed them and dispatch them to military accommodation or to *dharmashalas* (Chapter 11, Documents 6–8). Reports of cooperation from organizations like the Muslim League were received from Bengal, Karachi, Belgaum, and Ahmedabad (Chapter 2, Documents 61–3). All those who participated in refugee relief work complained about the complete indifference of the government towards the plight of the Indian refugees, even as they made good arrangements for the Anglo-Indian refugees.

The next chapter deals with the political activities of the Congress during the months of March and April 1942. These activities, which included constructive work, more volunteer activity, continuing tours by major Congress leaders in and outside their respective provinces,

and the celebration of National Week (from 6 to 13 April) were taking place against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating war situation in the Far East (Chapter 2, Documents 2–18, 20–8, and 30). This gave a special focus and urgency to the task of volunteering in provinces like Bengal, which had to cope with the influx of refugees from Burma and other places (Chapter 2, Document 8). This was also the time of the arrival of the Cripps Mission to India, which is taken up in detail in the subsequent chapter. The meetings held in the course of the National Week were attended by thousands, according to government reports. Promotion of khadi, Hindu–Muslim unity, and the removal of untouchability were the three main activities that were emphasized during the observance of the National Week. Thirteenth of April, which ever since 1919 had been observed as Jallianwala Bagh Day, meant that meetings were also held separately at which strong anti-British speeches were made. The North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) also observed Martyr's Day on 23 April 1942 in memory of the Kissa Kahani Bazar incident of 1930, in which many were killed when they were protesting against the arrest of some local Congress leaders (Chapter 2, Documents 22–8).

News of Rajagopalachari's deviations from the Congress policy was beginning to trickle in and this provoked sharp reactions in different provinces (Chapter 2, Document 19; see also Chapter 10, Documents 16, 29, 38, and 52). There were also some reservations about the Congress High Command's stand that only those Congressmen and women who had participated in the Individual Satyagraha could be members of the various Congress Committees.

II

Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Privy Seal and a member of the British War Cabinet, came to India on 22 March 1942 to settle the constitutional problem of India. He came with a copy of the new draft declaration of British policy on India, and with a clear mandate to obtain Indian leaders' consent to the draft declaration. Cripps spent a fortnight in India discussing the draft with Indian leaders of all shades and opinions. None agreed with the draft and Cripps went back to England after declaring that the Mission had failed. This briefly is the story of Cripps Mission described in the documents that follow. The entire section (Chapter 3) contains a total of 237 documents, and has been divided into six subsections. All the subsections put together tell the story of the Cripps Mission from its inception in February 1942 to its final collapse in April 1942. Even after its failure, the Mission continued to be a topic of lively debate and discussion among the British officials, Indian leaders, and in the newspapers. Therefore, the documents do not stop with the collapse of the Mission in April but go on to deal with its implications for Indian politics, and the reactions and counter-reactions that developed subsequent to the collapse of the Mission.

Subsection A: 'The Background and the Proposals' (Chapter 3, Documents 1–37) deals with documents that discuss the background to the Mission. The story of Cripps Mission may be said to have begun with the reconstitution of British War Cabinet and Cripps's inclusion in it towards the end of February 1942. The subsection therefore opens with the news of the reconstitution of the British War Cabinet (Chapter 3, Document 1). The various documents in the subsection discuss the background to the Mission, factors that may have influenced the British decision to send Cripps to India, the air of optimism in the press, speculations in the official circles on the possibility of the success of the Mission, and Cripps's own statements. The nature of speculations among Indian leaders differed from those among the British officials.

Indian leaders were curious about what the proposals contained and whether they would meet their expectations. The British officials, who knew the contents of the proposals, discussed whether they would be accepted by the Indians or not.

The documents provide answers to five major questions. Why did the British decide to send Cripps to India at the beginning of 1942? How did various British officials in England and India understand the Mission (Chapter 3, Section B: 'The British Perspective', Documents 38–75)? How did Congress leaders look upon the proposals and why did Congress reject them in the end (Chapter 3, Section C: 'Cripps Proposals and Congress', Documents 76–119)? What were the different ways in which other political forces in India relate to the Mission (Chapter 3, Section D: 'Cripps Proposals and Other Political Forces', Documents 120–34)? And finally, what was the nature of the debate that was generated around Cripps Mission, after its collapse (Chapter 3, Section E: 'Responses in the Press Breakdown of Negotiations, and the Subsequent Collapse of the Mission', Documents 135–76, and Chapter 3, Section F: 'Reactions and Counter-reactions', Documents 177–237)?

It was primarily the immediacy of the threat of Japanese attack that fed into the decision to send Cripps to India. Between the Pearl Harbour attack in December 1941 and the Japanese capture of Rangoon on 8 March 1942, Japan had occupied the whole of South-East Asia. The imminence of Japanese attack made it imperative for the British to reach out to Indians with some blue print of a settlement. Along with this there were also pressures from US President Roosevelt and the Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. It was largely as a result of these pressures that the Cripps Mission was announced by Churchill. But it was quite clear that there was to be no going back on fundamental imperialist assumptions on India. Churchill made it quite clear to Roosevelt that the declaration of dominion status after the war will only come with imperialist strings attached to it:

We must not on any account break with the Moslems who represent a hundred million people and the main army elements on which we must rely for the immediate fighting. We have also to consider our duty towards thirty to forty million untouchables and our treaty with the princes' states of India, perhaps eighty millions. Naturally we do not want to throw India into chaos on the eve of invasion. (Chapter 3, Document 11)

Initially there were conflicting signals on the possibility of the Mission succeeding. The choice of Cripps was important. He had the image of being a friend of India and being sympathetic to the national movement. He had also been a personal friend of Nehru. It, therefore, imparted some credibility to the Mission. As a result, the decision met with initial optimism and was welcomed all over India. However, the contents of the draft declaration Cripps was carrying with him were not accessible to the Indian leaders immediately. Those British officials who had seen the draft declaration in England were convinced that it was bound to fail. Amery, the Secretary of State, shared his impressions with Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy, that 'Congress will not accept' the proposals (Chapter 3, Document 10; also M. Hallet's letter to Lord Linlithgow, Chapter 3, Document 13). B. Shiva Rao, in a letter to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, quoted an English official: 'I am certain that Cripps will go back a discredited man. Churchill is sending him out not because he has hopes of settlement but because Labour is giving trouble' (Chapter 3, Document 22). So whereas the Indians were quietly optimistic before having seen the draft, those who had seen it were quite certain about the expected outcome of the mission.

There was some clarity in the British official circles that Cripps was being sent, not with a tentative outline to be negotiated and modified but with a well-worked-out plan, which could

only be accepted or rejected. Any modification or revision of the plan was ruled out from the very beginning. Cripps's job was to try and get the Indian leaders to accept the proposals. In this sense at least Cripps, and also Indian leaders, were being served with a *fait accompli*. Right at the beginning Churchill made it clear in a letter to Linlithgow that Cripps 'is of course bound by the draft declaration'. He also emphasized: 'The draft on which we have agreed represents our united policy. If that is rejected by the Indian parties for whose benefit it has been devised, our sincerity will be proved to the world ...' (Chapter 3, Document 15).

The Draft Declaration (Chapter 3, Document 2) was a brief document that consisted of a Preamble and the text that contained five clauses. The text dealt with two separate aspects: what would be the nature of the constitutional arrangement *after* the war; and what was to be done *during* the war to ensure an effective defence of the country. One contentious clause (Clause C[i] and [ii]) was that any province could stay out of the proposed Union and frame its own separate constitution that would be recognized by the British government. Another contentious clause (Clause E) was that during the war the defence of the country would remain firmly in British hands. As it happened, it was primarily the defence issue, as this clause came to be called, that became the deciding factor in the eventual collapse of the Mission.

Cripps issued a broadcast and held a press conference at which copies of the draft were circulated. At the broadcast Cripps called India a great subcontinent where 'there is more than one people, there are many people and races as there are in the great sub-continent of Russia'. He also defended the defence and the non-accession clauses in the draft declaration (Chapter 3, Documents 35–7).

At a time when the Indian leaders were speculating about what the proposals might contain, the British officials had already begun talking about the likely outcome of the Mission. There seemed to be little doubt in their minds about the unsatisfactory nature of the proposals. Amery, the Secretary of State, hoped that Congress would realize that the 'half loaf which is all that either we or the rest of India can give them, is better than no bread' (Chapter 3, Document 43). It soon became quite clear by the end of March within a week of Cripps's arrival that the scheme had collapsed. Cripps told Linlithgow in a meeting that 'he was finished' and how 'he thought Indian leaders had missed an excellent offer' (Chapter 3, Document 49). Cripps wanted to make a last attempt to contact individual leaders from the major political parties and ask them to prepare an alternative scheme acceptable to them all. But Linlithgow did not encourage him to follow that course. By the first week of April it became obvious that the proposals would not be accepted by any major political party. None of the important political actors—Congress, Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, All Parties Sikh Committee, State Peoples Conference, Depressed Class League and Liberals—accepted the Scheme. Being the largest party, the rejection by Congress was discussed the maximum in the official circles. Amery wrote to Linlithgow: 'Gandhi has once again persuaded them that wrecking is the best policy. I am not sure that these people really want responsibility, and if we offered them the moon, they would probably reject it because of the wrinkles on its surface' (Chapter 3, Document 56).

In an important press conference held in England, Amery elaborated upon the essentials of British policy and how it was simply not possible for them to modify the proposals. He virtually ruled out transferring Defence to an Indian minister. Amery saw the defence of India as part of larger war against the Axis Powers and linked to the defence of Ceylone and Burma. The forces deployed in India did not just consist of the Indian troops but also British troops, British air force and navy. Moreover, the Indian army was part of a great 'tradition of loyalty

to the King Emperor, and to the Commander-in-Chief' and this loyalty could not be 'naturally transferred' to an Indian member of the Executive. On the contentious clauses providing the princes and provinces freedom not to join the Constituent Assembly, Amery provided interesting explanation. According to him, it was not a case of trying to break up the unity of India but, on the contrary, an attempt to facilitate the majority elements to go ahead and frame a constitution without any hindrance or obstacles that might come from the dissenting provinces (Chapter 3, Document 62).

During the first week of April there was considerable uncertainty in the air. Much depended on what the Congress stand would be. Cripps realized that this was the most crucial aspect and made it clear to Churchill in a long telegram: 'I must point out that if Congress do not accept no one will dare to state that they will accept the Scheme. I should expect it to be turned down by all sections including Muslim League' (Chapter 3, Document 57). Cripps had also correctly understood that Defence was the most crucial aspect as far as Congress was concerned. The only way to get Congress to accept the scheme was to bring changes in the defence clause. This, for Cripps, was the only chance of the acceptance of the proposals. Even though Linlithgow in India and Churchill in England were reluctant to bring about any major changes in the original proposals, a possibility of modifications in the original proposals emerged in the form of the Johnson Formula. (For the entire story of the Johnson Formula, see Chapter 3, Documents 66–8, 96–7, and 99.) Col. Louis Johnson was a representative of US President Roosevelt. His initiative and Cripps's anxiety to reach a settlement led to the creation of the Johnson Formula. It was prepared after consultations among Johnson, Cripps, Nehru, and Azad. According to the formula all the defence functions were to be organizationally separated into a War Department to be retained by the Commander-in-Chief, and a Defence Department to be placed in charge of a representative Indian member. Although the basic principle of the organizational separation was accepted by the Congress, differences remained on the nature of responsibilities to be allotted to the Defence Member. The three parties—Cripps, Col. Johnson, and the Congress—proposed different formulas and they could not agree on a common list of functions of the Defence Member. But, as it happened, it did not matter in the end because Linlithgow and Amery were not very enthusiastic about the idea and the War Cabinet in England thought that Cripps had gone too far in trying to win Congress acceptance.

The Johnson formula proved to be a mere aberration in the story of Cripps Mission. Congress leaders had a different list of functions which did not match the list prepared by Amery and Linlithgow. Differences also persisted between Cripps on the one hand and Amery and Linlithgow on the other. In complete exasperation Cripps made a final appeal to Churchill and the War Cabinet: 'Unless I am trusted I cannot carry on with the task' (Chapter 3, Document 69). He was restrained by Churchill and discouraged from going ahead with the scheme: 'We feel that in your natural desire to reach a settlement with Congress you may be drawn into positions far different from any the Cabinet and Ministers of Cabinet rank approved before you set forth' (Chapter 3, Document 70). Churchill also reminded Cripps categorically: '... you speak of carrying on negotiations. It was certainly agreed between us all that there were not to be negotiations but that you were to try to gain acceptance with possibly minor variations ...' (Chapter 3, Document 70). It thus became clear that Cripps's role in the Mission was that of a messenger, not that of a negotiator. This for all practical purposes was the end of Cripps Mission. The responses of all the major political forces were along expected lines and Cripps returned to England a disappointed man.

During his dialogues with the Viceroy and the War Cabinet, Cripps had emphasized that there were many voices within Congress regarding the attitude to the proposals and that they could utilize these differences to their advantage. In their view, at one end of the spectrum was the 'Gandhi group' which was completely opposed to the proposals. The other end was occupied by Rajaji who favoured acceptance. In between were Nehru and Azad who were oscillating between the two extremes. Cripps had pinned his hopes on obtaining Nehru's support through modifications in the defence clause. That, however, could not happen. The CWC with a single voice rejected the proposals (Chapter 3, Document 92).

It is, however, true that there existed multiple voices within Congress. Of all the Congress leaders Mahatma Gandhi was most unambiguously against the proposals. Almost immediately after Cripps's arrival in India, Gandhi is reported to have told him in their first meeting: 'Why did you come if this is what you had to offer? If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the first plane home' (Chapter 3, Document 119). Immediately after his meeting with Cripps, Gandhi wrote a letter to Nehru stating categorically that 'I am clearly of the view that we cannot accept this "offer"' (Chapter 3, Document 82). In an interview given shortly after his meeting with Cripps, Gandhi, with his characteristic clarity, put the whole question in perspective: 'Sir Stafford is a very good man, but he has entered bad machinery—British imperialism. He hopes to improve that machinery, but in the end it will be the machinery that will get the better of him' (Chapter 3, Document 83).

As against Gandhi's firm opposition, Nehru and Azad were keen on certain basic modifications. These pertained to defence being put in charge of a representative Indian and the formation of a truly national government at the centre. These Congress leaders insisted that merely the Indianization of Viceroy's Executive Council was not enough and did not amount to the creation of a national cabinet at the centre. As it happened the British government was unable, or unwilling, to come close to their demand. The inevitable result was the failure of the Mission. It is difficult to determine what might have happened if both these demands of Nehru and Azad had been accepted. Would the differences among Congress leaders have still persisted? The documents do not provide the answer to this important question. But they do provide ample evidence that in the end the fate of Cripps Mission was determined not so much by differences among Congress leaders as by those among the British. Linlithgow and Amery did not quite see eye to eye with Cripps, and Churchill had an entirely different understanding of the Mission. Cripps pleaded with all to adopt a more flexible approach but he was left stranded in the end.

The Congress rejected the proposals unanimously but was not the only force to do it. The proposals were found inadequate and unsatisfactory and rejected by most parties, though for different reasons. The Muslim League did not have much problem with the defence clause but was unhappy that the right of secession was extended to provinces and not to communities. The secession clause was to come into operation only if more than two-fifths (40 per cent) members of the provincial assembly decided against accession. It was clear to the Muslim League that with precarious support base in Punjab and Bengal and a very marginal Muslim majority there, it would be impossible for Muslim League to prevent both these provinces from acceding. Predictably, Hindu Mahasabha was in favour of the declaration of independence contained in clause (a) but was opposed to the non-accession clause. They were told by Cripps that they did not have the option to accept the proposals partially. The proposals were to be accepted or rejected as a whole on fundamental matters (Chapter 3, Document 126). As a result Hindu Mahasabha too rejected the proposals. Various other groups and parties also followed suit.

The rejection of the proposals by the major actors was accompanied by a near total disapproval of the Mission in the newspapers. Both the national and the regional papers scrutinized the Mission and criticized the British for its failure. In particular the failure to Indianize defence and the non-accession clause came in for sharp criticism. It was mentioned that independence was being offered to Indians at the cost of unity. One newspaper summed it up aptly: 'In the pre-Crippsian days, we were told that in the interests of integrity we can't get freedom. Now we are told that in the interests of our contingent freedom we can't have our integrity' (Chapter 3, Document 149). Interesting stories and imageries were constructed to describe the Cripps Mission (Chapter 3, Documents 163 and 169).

The last subsection 'Reactions and Counter-reactions' carries documents that contain the positions and resolutions of various organizations, debates and discussions that followed the failure of the Mission, statements by British officials and Indian leaders, allegations and counter-allegations, and clarifications made by various political actors involved in the Cripps Mission.

The Cripps Mission lasted for around three weeks and did not lead to any concrete resolution to any major problem. But these three weeks were not an aberration by any means. Cripps Mission failed but it was not inconsequential. It left its mark on the Indian politics in such a way that the post-Cripps politics emerged very different from pre-Cripps days in some crucial ways. One legacy of the Mission was the legitimacy it imparted to the Pakistan issue. The Cripps interlude transformed the issue of Pakistan from being a mere abstract idea, to a concrete political option that had to be addressed by all. The Pakistan question could be opposed but it could no longer be ignored or pushed aside. It may be said that shifting the Pakistan issue from the margins of Indian politics to its centre stage was one major contribution of Cripps Mission.

III

After that interlude of the Cripps visit, we look at the various student activities during this period. Given the fact that students played such a vital role in the Quit India Movement, it is important to take stock of their activities in the months prior to the actual movement. One of the first items in Chapter 4 is M.K. Gandhi's speech at the Benares Hindu University (BHU) on 21 January 1942, in which he took the university authorities to task for their persistence with the English language. He also appealed to the students of BHU to reach out to their counterparts in Aligarh and thus work towards Hindu-Muslim unity (Chapter 4, Document 4).

The Left-inclined All India Students Federation (AISF) had split into two camps in 1941 over the issue of support to the Individual Satyagraha campaign. In 1942 the differences were further accentuated over the People's War line adopted by the Communist Party. While the Faruqui group in the AISF pledged unconditional support to the war, the rival Shah group was more closely aligned with the Congress Socialists (Chapter 4, Documents 1, 5-7, 11, and 16). Mutual recrimination and bitterness prevailed in the early months of 1942, but in spite of this, students did participate actively in the Independence Day celebrations, the National Week, and other Congress activities (Chapter 4, Document 2).

By the end of April, the government of India decided to release all the Communists to enable them to participate in pro-war meetings (Chapter 4, Document 17). This gave a boost to the activities of the People's War group in the AISF (Chapter 4, Document 19). There was a communal flare-up in the Allahabad University, when pro-Muslim League students were

given permission by the Vice Chancellor to fly the League flag along with the Congress flag atop the Science block of the University. Friction continued until August 1943 (Chapter 4, Documents 15 and 23).

By July 1942 Congress leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel at one end of the spectrum and Ram Manohar Lohia at the other were actively appealing to the students to be ready for the movement that Gandhiji was about to launch (Chapter 4, Documents 21–2). Finally and significantly, just on the eve of the Quit India Movement the Faruqui wing of the AISF declared its support to the Congress (Chapter 4, Documents 23 and 25). As has been documented in the second volume, under the leadership of Farooqui, these students played a major role in the Quit India Movement.

The next chapter contains the documents relating to the CPI for this period. It begins with the much-debated People's War line, as first enunciated by the prisoners in the Deoli Camp in November 1941 (Chapter 5, Document 1). Nazism was now identified as the main enemy of the international proletariat because it had attacked the 'fortress of Socialism', that is, the Soviet Union. Hence, the war against Nazism waged by the USSR along with Britain was identified as a 'People's War'.

At the beginning of 1942, several prominent Communist leaders (who were also members of the AICC) were still behind bars. K.M. Ashraf, R.D. Bharadwaj, K. Damodaran, Sohan Singh Josh, and S.G. Sardesai were some of those in prison (Chapter 5, Documents 2–3). Prominent labour leader N.M. Joshi and others who were outside were lobbying for their release (Chapter 5, Documents 5 and 24). The Government of India, however, was wary of releasing the Communists despite their professions of support to the war. Suspicion and dislike of the Communists was too deep-rooted in the minds of British officials and it was hard to believe that they were sincere in their professions of support to the war effort (Chapter 5, Document 4). The Communists' own statements that the new line was the only way out of the present stagnation in the party gave them the feeling that the People's War line had been adopted in an opportunistic manner. Despite these misgivings, by May 1942, the Government of India was working out the modalities of actually releasing the Communist leaders gradually and cautiously (Chapter 5, Documents 31–3 and 41). When they were actually released and the ban on the Communist Party lifted, the government kept a close watch on their activities on the one hand and, on the other, entered into extensive parleys with P.C. Joshi, one of the leading Communist figures (Chapter 5, Documents 45–6).

In this chapter, the proceedings of the 19th session of the All India Trade Union Congress held in Kanpur are also covered (Chapter 5, Documents 12–14). There were sharp differences of opinion between those who were in favour of supporting the war effort and others (including Jawaharlal Nehru who addressed the session), who minced no words in attacking the government. Congress reactions to the People's War line may be seen in J.B. Kripalani's long article on the subject dated 24 February 1942 (Chapter 5, Document 16). A rather curious development in April 1942 was the coming together of C. Rajagopalachari and the Communists—strange bedfellows indeed (Chapter 5, Documents 34, 39)! As the Congress moved closer and closer towards launching a mass movement, the Communist–Rajagopalachari camp's feeling of alarm grew. One of the last documents in this chapter is P.C. Joshi's open letter to the members of the CWC, appealing to them not to launch a mass struggle at this juncture as it would be suicidal (Chapter 5, Document 54).

The following chapter discusses the activities of two other Left organizations: the Kisan Sabha and CSP in these months. The People's War line adopted by the Communist Party created

rifts within the Kisan Sabha ranks. The All India Kisan Sabha passed a resolution expressing support for the line at its meeting in January 1942 (Chapter 6, Document 2). However, as the year progressed, the differences became more pronounced. One section, which was more in tune with the Congress and the Forward Bloc, wanted no compromise with the British government, while the other was inclined to go along with the Communist position (Chapter 6, Documents 7–10). By late July, however, there were signs of even the latter group moving closer to the Congress stand on launching a mass movement (Chapter 6, Document 31).

The CSP did not feel the need to review their position on the war in this period. They were neither convinced that the People's War line was warranted nor did they favour the Bardoli Resolution of the Congress (Chapter 6, Documents 20–1). Acharya Narendra Deva's article titled 'The War: Imperialist or People's?' clarified the CSP position in this regard (Chapter 6, Document 24). Most of the CSP activity in these months was amongst students. Yusuf Meherally, the Bombay CSP leader, advised them to work in the villages during the vacations (Chapter 6, Document 26).

The Socialists were quick to respond to Mahatma Gandhi's call for a mass movement. As early as in May 1942, Yusuf Meherally gave a call to all 'loyal Congressmen' to prepare themselves for the movement that Gandhiji was going to launch (Chapter 6, Document 29). This was endorsed by the Maharashtra Provincial CSP (Chapter 6, Document 30). The visit of Ram Nandan Misra, Bihar CSP leader, to Wardha to meet Gandhiji in July 1942 and the presence of Acharya Narendra Deva at the Sevagram ashram at this time enabled the CSP to align itself with the Gandhian programme of action for the immediate future (Chapter 6, Document 31). On 6 August the National Executive of the All India Congress Socialist Party met in Bombay and pledged to give wholehearted support to the non-violent mass movement which, they believed, would 'know no failure' (Chapter 6, Document 35).

In Chapter 7, the section on women's activities dwells largely on the initiatives of the women's department of the AICC headed by Sucheta Kripalani (Chapter 7, Documents 2–6). The role of the women's committee in helping to rehabilitate the evacuees, especially the children, is covered in the correspondence of Sucheta Kripalani with Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru (Chapter 7, Documents 5–8).

The chapter also covers the proceedings and resolutions passed by the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) at its Cocanada (Kakinada) session held in late December 1941–early January 1942 (Chapter 7, Document 1). The standing committee of the AIWC again met in May 1942 and passed resolutions on the Cripps mission, evacuation from Burma, and the molestation of women by soldiers in many parts of the country. The conference also held a training camp at Abrama in Surat district (Chapter 7, Documents 9 and 11).

Section B of this chapter covers the proceedings of the All India Depressed Classes Conference at Meerut as also the Madras Backward Classes Conference (Chapter 7, Documents 12–15). At the All India Scheduled Castes Federation Conference (Chapter 7, Documents 19–20), B.R. Ambedkar stated that in all future constitutional negotiations it must be ensured that the scheduled castes (SCs) were not treated as a subsection of the Hindu community. He wanted a separate settlement of villages for the SCs. Ambedkar also described all talk of civil disobedience at this juncture as 'treachery to India' (Chapter 7, Document 21).

However, the Punjab Depressed Classes League at its annual session in early August expressed full confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. They were also critical of Ambedkar's idea of separate *bastis* (settlements) for Harijans. Nor did they support the idea of Pakistan, which they regarded as a dangerous move (Chapter 7, Document 22). So clearly there

were sharp differences of opinion between the more pro-British Scheduled Castes Federation (closer to Ambedkar) and the Depressed Classes' League which was more nationalistic and Congress-minded in its outlook.

In the next chapter, we look at the activities and policies of the Forward Bloc and the Radical Democratic Party during this period. Sind and Bombay were important centres of Forward Bloc activity (Chapter 8, Documents 2–3, 10–11, and 19). The Forward Bloc claimed that there was no change in the stand they had adopted at the Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh in 1940. They were critical of all groups offering support to the war effort—Communists and Kisan Sabhaites (Chapter 8, Document 5). While Subhas Chandra Bose encouraged the people to rise against the government through his broadcasts from Berlin, Rash Behari Bose was active in Tokyo drumming up support for Indian independence (Chapter 8, Documents 7–8).

Though the government's attitude towards the Forward Bloc was one of suspicion, the general feeling was that there was no point in banning the party as a whole since it had no great political significance even as it felt that action needed to be taken against certain leaders who were clearly conniving with the 'enemy' (Chapter 8, Document 4). By late June 1942, however, the government changed its views on the Forward Bloc and decided to ban it (Chapter 8, Document 22). Offices of the party were searched and documents seized during the ensuing period (Chapter 8, Document 23).

The relations between the Congress and Forward Bloc in this period had an interesting element of mutual regard, basic differences notwithstanding (Chapter 8, Documents 9, 11). Gandhiji in his interview to Louis Fischer in June 1942 described Bose as a 'patriot of patriots' (Chapter 8, Document 20). Interestingly, like so many other groups, the Forward Bloc too decided to give support to the Congress on the eve of the Quit India Movement (Chapter 8, Document 28).

M.N. Roy's Radical Democratic Party did not have much political influence in this period but the party was clearly supportive of British government's war effort. Party workers in Karachi were asked to fight Fascism and support the Scorched Earth Policy of the government (Chapter 8, Document 29). Similar activity was also reported from Sholapur in the Bombay Province (Chapter 8, Document 30).

The year saw rather unusual expressions of opinion on the communal problem. Early in 1942, there was a rather interesting letter from Ghanshyamdas Birla, the prominent industrialist, to Jawaharlal Nehru expressing his views on the Pakistan demand. Any partner in a business, he pointed out, had a right to demand separation if he was not satisfied with the partnership. But he added that, if he were a Muslim, he would not demand Pakistan because it would be a very poor state having no iron or coal (Chapter 9, Document 3)!

In the meantime, Syed Mahmud, a prominent Congress leader from Bihar, had published a pamphlet on the Hindu-Muslim problem in which he suggested a rapprochement with Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He brought this to the notice of Jawaharlal Nehru who was not inclined to agree with him because his assessment of Jinnah was that he was trying to stop the democratization of the country. Times were changing very rapidly and in Jawaharlal Nehru's view, forces like Jinnah's would be soon swept away (Chapter 9, Documents 6–8). In this respect Nehru was undoubtedly far too optimistic. There were many who felt that Congress should open the door to negotiations with Jinnah and Gandhi was himself willing to meet Jinnah at any time (Chapter 9, Document 22). But for the Congress to do so as the Hindu counterpart of the Muslim League was not acceptable to anyone who believed in a secular India. In any case, the Congress had originated and grown on very different premises and ideals.

Besides, the Muslim League was not the sole spokesman of the Muslims in India at this time, much as Jinnah would like to believe that it was. It may be noted that there were several Muslim voices in this period besides that of the Muslim League (Chapter 9, Document 26). There was the All India Independent Muslim Parties Board, the All India Momin Conference, the All India Shia Political Conference, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, and the Krishak Proja Party of Bengal. The All India Momin Conference claimed that it represented forty-five million Muslims (Chapter 9, Documents 19–20). However, the British government repudiated this claim and insisted that there was no other organization which was as representative of Muslim political opinion as the Muslim League. This was evident from a reply given by Mr Amery, the Secretary of State, to Mr Sorensen, a Labour Party MP, in March 1942 (Chapter 9, Document 26).

The All India Hindu Mahasabha, at its meeting on 10 May, passed resolutions in favour of independence and against Pakistan, which have been covered here (Chapter 9, Document 55). An Anti-Pakistan Day was also observed.

The Akalis too were opposed to the Pakistan demand and from March 1942 they concentrated their efforts on consolidating their hold over the Sikhs. They also insisted that the Sikhs should be consulted in any constitutional reforms even as they asked the British to ignore Jinnah's threats (Chapter 9, Documents 24 and 42). But by May 1942, Akali politics assumed a less strident character due partly to gratification at the sympathetic references to Sikhs made by Amery and Cripps in the House of Commons. Around this time there were expectations of an Akali rapprochement with the Unionist Party (Chapter 9, Document 46), which eventually led to the Sikander–Baldev Singh pact in June 1942 wherein the Unionists promised the Sikhs their due share in the services among other things (Chapter 9, Document 80).

Interestingly, in June 1942, Fazlul Huq of Bengal broke away from the Muslim League declaring it 'neither Islamic nor patriotic' (Chapter 9, Document 81). Ironically, just at this time C. Rajagopalachari and the Communists were giving legitimacy to the Muslim League (Chapter 9, Document 52). As for the League itself, it was taking up the same kind of issues as the Congress, that is, refugee relief, problems of evacuation from the coastal areas of the east, and so on. But they made sure that these arrangements were only for the Muslim sections of the population (Chapter 9, Documents 32 and 39).

It is also significant that it was in this year that Mahatma Gandhi moved out of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and formed his own separate Hindustani Prachar Sabha (Chapter 9, Document 41). Perhaps he was trying to bridge the growing communal divide through intervention in the language issue. His letters to Muslim correspondents in July 1942 and the response that it evoked from Muhammad Ali Jinnah were part of the same effort to achieve Hindu–Muslim unity (Chapter 9, Documents 89–90).

Around this time, Rajagopalachari was gradually moving on to a path very different from that of the other Congress leaders. Even as early as in January 1942, there were rumours of his holding talks with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, much to the consternation of many, including the Liberal leader, M.R. Jayakar (Chapter 10, Document 2). Though he denied these rumours, his Madras Resolution of April 1942 revealed that he was willing to go to the extent of giving in to the Pakistan demand. The two Madras Resolutions, one on the Pakistan demand and the other calling for the formation of a popular Congress government in Madras, caused a stir in the Congress ranks and much annoyance to his closest associates, including Mahatma Gandhi himself (Chapter 10, Documents 13–27 and 37). Even S. Satyamurti, Congress leader from Madras, was openly critical of him and described his moves as 'dangerous' (Chapter 10, Documents 33, 52, and 59). However, the Muslim League and certain other sections like the

Depressed Classes League welcomed his move (Chapter 10, Document 28). The reaction of the Justice Party leader E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker was that while the resolutions gladdened him in some respects, he was rather sceptical of Rajagopalachari's intentions in proposing the same (Chapter 10, Document 21).

Rajagopalachari was not deterred by the volume of criticism directed against him. Rather, he felt that it was his mission to convince people about his stance. Following the Allahabad AICC meeting, he toured Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country, reiterating his position at several public meetings (Chapter 10, Documents 31, 37, and 51). At places he faced hostile audiences who attacked him and even threw tar at him on one occasion (Chapter 10, Documents 41 and 69). Mahatma Gandhi was distressed at this intolerant behaviour which he felt was not only detrimental to the evolution of democracy but also indicated a lack of openness of mind. He pleaded that Rajaji should be given a patient hearing, even though he may be in the wrong. He invited Rajaji to Wardha just before the Bombay AICC meeting in order to explain his stand to him (Chapter 10, Document 62).

In the meantime, Rajaji had begun negotiations with R.M. Maxwell, the Home Secretary, to release the Communists from jail (Chapter 10, Documents 77–81). This rather curious coming together of Rajagopalachari and the Communists on the question of support to Britain in the war against Japan as well as on the Pakistan issue forms a significant part of the developments of 1942.

We have a section documenting the reactions to the war situation. The collapse of Singapore and Malaya, and then Burma, under the Japanese onslaught caused panic in several parts of the country. There was an exodus from the cities to the villages, the unsettling of markets in Bombay and Ahmedabad, and withdrawals from banks and post offices (Chapter 11, Documents 4, 5, 9, 12, 16, and 17). In Jamshedpur, the exodus from the factories was very substantial because of rumours that the industrialists were closing down factories so as to lessen the possibility of air raids. Shortage of foodgrains was also beginning to be felt. In UP, Punjab, Delhi, and the NWFP, there was shortage of wheat (Chapter 11, Documents 10, 26, 29). Many *talukas* and districts of Bombay Province were declared scarcity-hit (Chapter 11, Document 18) and in Kerala, the sudden drying up of rice supplies from Burma caused serious problems. In Coorg, a shortage of ragi was reported. More and more foodgrains began to be hoarded (Chapter 11, Document 98).

By March 1942 there were rumours about the bombing of Chittagong, Calcutta, and Madras. This triggered off a fresh exodus from these cities. The arrival of British troops in places like Ranchi and Jamshedpur created a feeling that these places were unsafe to live in. Reports of misbehaviour by troops in the Poona Cantonment added to the sense of uneasiness. The first batch of American troops arrived in India in the same month. One of the main causes of inconvenience was the immobilization or removal of boats and bicycles from within twenty miles of the coast in Orissa.

On all these issues, Mahatma Gandhi had his own advice to offer. The instructions issued by the AICC were in consonance with his views. His advice to people living in the urban areas, which were likely to be affected by a Japanese attack, was to withdraw to the countryside. His long-held views that each village should be self-sufficient in foodgrains and cloth proved to be extremely relevant for those difficult times (Chapter 11, Documents 2 and 56). On the issue of the Scorched Earth Policy, Gandhiji's position was radically different from that of most of the other Congress leaders. He saw no logic in destroying life or property. He declared that he would

rather leave his crops and homestead for the enemy to use (Chapter 11, Document 55). In any case he refused to regard anyone as his enemy. It was during these months that Gandhiji also came up with the idea of a yarn currency. If money was steadily losing its value, then people could spin yarn and exchange it for all their daily needs (Chapter 11, Documents 90 and 132).

The situation took a turn for the worse in the Assam sector in mid-May 1942, after the bombings in Imphal on 10 and 16 May (Chapter 11, Document 107). Before that, Chittagong airport had been bombed on 8 and 9 May. In the former case, a lot of confusion appears to have ensued with the civil administration breaking down completely and several cases of arson and looting. People hastily moved out of towns like Silchar in large numbers and there were rumours that Gauhati was to be bombed next (Chapter 11, Document 120).

Meanwhile, the arrival of American troops added to the misgivings and resentment among the Indian people. 'We do not want further mortgages on the already mortgaged body and soul of India', declared the *Searchlight* from Patna (Chapter 11, Document 117). Why should foreign troops be brought in when there was enough manpower available within the country? Mahatma Gandhi was initially unhappy about the stationing of the allied troops in India but by late June, he had accepted the need for the troops. As he put it:

India must not by any act of hers short of national suicide let China down or put the Allied powers in jeopardy. So long therefore as India lacks faith in the capacity of non-violence to protect her against aggression from without, the demand for the withdrawal of the Allied troops during the pendency of the war would itself be an act of violence. (Chapter 11, Document 122)

The acquiring of educational institutions for emergency services caused much resentment in towns like Jubbulpore in the Central Provinces (Chapter 11, Document 119).

While all this was proceeding apace, the growing popularity of enemy broadcasts became a source of great uneasiness to the government. The credibility of the Government All India Radio was obviously at an all-time low (Chapter 11, Document 121).

The Allahabad AICC meeting of late April to early May 1942 ushered in one of the most crucial phases of 1942. It marked a turning point in many ways. The session heralded a definitive change in the attitude of the Congress towards the British government. Gone was the spirit of accommodation which had been manifested at Bardoli in the beginning of the year. The failure of the Cripps Mission was obviously the trigger. Now, clearly, the organization was preparing itself for a mass movement (Chapter 12, Documents 12–13, 16, 18, and 21–3). The initiative was back in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi, who, in his article in the *Harijan* on 10 May 1942, clearly revealed his line of thinking which would remain absolutely consistent until the launching of the Quit India Movement (Chapter 12, Document 35). He succeeded in winning a reluctant Jawaharlal Nehru over to his point of view. However, this persuasion was preceded by some days of tension between the two, which is evident in Gandhiji's correspondence with Patel and with Nehru himself in late April 1942. Maulana Azad was apparently more recalcitrant and Gandhi was clearly unhappy with him and would have him out of the Presidentship of the Congress at this juncture, if he could (Chapter 12, Document 112).

The controversial Madras Resolutions, passed on the eve of the Allahabad session at the behest of C. Rajagopalachari, caused a great deal of excitement. There were reactions to it from practically every PCC and most of them expressed their disagreement with the stand on Pakistan in particular. At Allahabad, Rajagopalachari tendered his resignation from the CWC (Chapter 12, Document 16–17) and, though he continued to maintain cordial relations with Mahatma Gandhi, he became increasingly distant from the other prominent leaders of the

Congress. They were all dismayed by his new approach and the vehemence with which he asserted it. Even in southern India, the prevailing mood, whether in Andhra, Karnataka, and Kerala or even in Tamil Nadu, was against Rajagopalachari's ideas of support to the British war effort and giving credence to the Pakistan demand.

The Allahabad session of the CWC was one of the most heated sessions in Congress history. Gandhiji, who did not attend the session, sent a draft resolution (Chapter 12, Document 12) through Mirabehn. This resolution stated clearly that Britain was incapable of defending India and that Japan's quarrel was not with India but with the British Empire. Therefore, the British should withdraw from India. Rajendra Prasad made revisions in this draft and toned it down considerably (Chapter 12, Document 13). But in essence his resolution was very similar to the Gandhi resolution, except in the attitude towards Japan. A third draft from Jawaharlal Nehru was very different in tone, in that it referred to the possibility of India joining the war, but only as a free people. It referred to India's 'antipathy to fascism and Nazism' (Chapter 12, Document 22) while the Gandhi resolution clearly stated that 'India bears no enmity towards Japan or towards any other nation'. Differences between the Gandhian camp and the others came to a head with Maulana Azad even threatening resignation. Finally, a compromise resolution was drawn up which was passed by the AICC session (Chapter 12, Document 23).

The resolutions passed at the Allahabad session not only dismayed the government, which quickly banned two of the resolutions (Chapter 12, Documents 20 and 31) relating to the plight of refugees and excesses of foreign military troops stationed in India, but it also brought forth a volley of protests from the Communist camp. The letters of G. Adhikari and the open letter issued by P.C. Joshi later, which are carried in the section on the Communists, reflect their stance (Chapter 5, Documents 38 and 54). The CSP position, however, was quite close to that of Gandhi, Patel, and Prasad with Acharya Narendra Dev stating, '[W]e can tell the British to go leaving us to our fate' (Chapter 5, Document 32).

The Liberals too were rather alarmed at all the talk of a mass movement and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru thought that it was rather foolish and short-sighted (Chapter 12, Documents 47-8 and 113). They felt that Rajagopalachari had a much more realistic approach to the situation. As a rejoinder, Maulana Azad issued a statement in New Delhi after the CWC meeting in mid-July, explaining that the Congress position was actually a very moderate and reasonable one.

The AIWC resolutions on molestation of women, the Cripps Mission, and evacuees from Burma which were placed before the Standing Committee of the AIWC (Chapter 7, Document 9) indicate how deeply political this organization had become. Gone were the days when the AIWC hesitated to take an overtly political stance on issues other than the social. Meanwhile, Gandhiji had sent out women emissaries to Orissa, Bengal, and Assam to study the problems of the people in these areas in the light of the so-called precautionary measures adopted by the government against a possible Japanese attack. This caused much consternation to the authorities (Chapter 12, Documents 69-75).

Maulana Azad, who was not too well at this time, was actively involved with refugee relief work in Bengal and Assam (Chapter 12, Document 43). Nehru was apparently rather depressed in May 1942 but seemed to have recovered by June after his Kulu trip and his conversations with Gandhiji (Chapter 12, Document 42). By early July he had plunged into frenzied activity, travelling almost daily.

The Wardha meeting of the CWC from 7 to 14 July was of crucial importance in the preparations for the Quit India Movement. Unlike at the Allahabad meeting, there was a clear

movement towards a consensus at this meeting (Chapter 12, Document 105). Asaf Ali was the only member who categorically stated that he was against the starting of the movement during the war since it would only help the Axis Powers and antagonize America and other foreigners. Yet, he too gave Gandhiji an assurance that once a decision was taken he would give wholehearted support. Significantly, Asaf Ali was severely criticized by Acharya Narendra Deva.

The draft resolution on the general political issue which was brought by Mahatma Gandhi was amended by Jawaharlal Nehru in consultation with some colleagues (Chapter 12, Documents 107–8). It may be mentioned here that Gandhiji's draft referred to 'general strikes by labourers all over the country' as one of the important activities of the intended movement—clearly the imprint of the Congress Socialists was visible here. While Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, J.B. Kripalani, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, and four others wanted no amendments to the original Gandhi draft, Jawaharlal Nehru felt that the draft should be placed before Gandhiji and on 12 July 1942, Gandhiji spoke at length on the draft and his own reasons for wanting to launch a movement as soon as possible. But in deference to the views of Nehru and Azad, he would delay starting the movement and suggested the convening of an AICC meeting at Bombay by the middle of the next month. Two days later, on 14 July, Gandhiji gave his approval to the amended draft and it was agreed that the CWC would meet next at Bombay on 4 August 1942, following which the AICC meeting would be held on 7 August.

The days following this crucial Wardha meeting were spent in hectic activity by most of the Congress leaders—each of whom went back to the respective home province and actively began preparations for a mass movement. Jawaharlal Nehru was feverishly active while Gandhi was instructing his colleagues about what was to be done in the eventuality of arrests and other repressive action (Chapter 12, Documents 51–3 and 55–7). However, he was also thinking in terms of a fast at this time—a move which his colleagues finally dissuaded him from resorting to (Chapter 12, Document 86).

From the speeches, statements, and instructions given by various leaders during this time we get a virtual blueprint of the Quit India Movement (Chapter 12, Document 174). Mahatma Gandhi, in an interview to the Press on 13 July, revealed the contours of the movement he was contemplating. This struggle did not involve jail-going, he said. His intention was to have a short and swift movement. Any negotiations with the British authorities could only be on the mode of the withdrawal of the British from India, following which the wise people of the country would come together and form a provisional government.

On 17 May Mirabehn had a meeting with J.G. Laithwaite, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy (Chapter 12, Document 120). This was after having been refused an interview with the Viceroy himself. At the meeting she explained the Gandhian position and the reasons for which he felt that the movement had to be launched.

In the meantime, the critics of the Congress were equally active. The speeches of Mohammad Ali Jinnah in this period were strident and shrill in their condemnation of the proposed Congress action (Chapter 12, Document 169). B.R. Ambedkar, who by this time had been co-opted into the Viceroy's Legislative Council, was very critical too (Chapter 12, Document 109). His fears of what an independent India could mean for the Depressed Classes were similar to the apprehensions voiced by Jinnah. The Liberals were apprehensive and so also was Rajagopalachari (Chapter 12, Documents 113, 132, 135, and 157) who had held talks with Jinnah in the meantime. The Communists were trying hard to persuade the Congress not to resort to this move (Chapter 12, Document 180).

At the end of this volume, we look at the definitive preparations for the Quit India Movement (Chapter 12, Documents 185 and 192). Gandhiji's instructions to his Ashram inmates on 1 August 1942 (Chapter 12, Document 170) indicate how well he could anticipate the coming turn of events. A little earlier, in mid-June 1942, he had told Ram Nandan Misra, a Bihar CSP leader, that he knew that the CSP was at one with him and that he wanted to start a mass movement which had always been greatly desired by the CSP (Chapter 6, Document 31). This statement, taken along with the fact that Acharya Narendra Deva, one of the most important CSP leaders of the time, was spending most of his time recuperating at Sevagram, gives us a clue as to why, curiously, the Gandhians and the Congress Socialists were moving so close to each other by this time. During the CWC discussions at Wardha in July, as indicated above, Acharya Narendra Deva was one of the staunchest supporters of Mahatma Gandhi's call for a Quit India Movement. Yusuf Meherally, another important Congress Socialist leader, had already pledged support to the Gandhian movement.

The telegram from Madan Mohan Malaviya to Gandhi on the eve of the movement, giving him his blessings and full support is a significant one (Chapter 12, Documents 198–9). It reveals the deep understanding between the two stalwarts despite their differences on some fundamental issues. Malaviya's wholehearted support contrasts with Rajagopalachari's vehement condemnation of the Quit India Resolution which he described as suicidal and fraught with the greatest mischief.

The *Andhra Circular*, a Telugu pamphlet issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee (Chapter 12, Document 209), and Mahatma Gandhi's own instructions to his fellow Congress workers just before going to jail (Chapter 12, Document 205–6) give us an idea of the broad parameters of the movement that was to unfold in the ensuing months.

VISALAKSHI MENON
SALIL MISRA

Acknowledgements

It is most unusual for a volume to be dedicated to its own creators. The present volume is. It is dedicated to the memory of Bipan Chandra and Visalakshi Menon, two of the three members of the editorial team. The dedication is made by the third, and the only surviving, member of the editorial team. It would always be a matter of deep regret for me that both Bipan, my teacher, and Visha, my dear friend, are not there to see the volume, which I know mattered a great deal to them, in the hands of its readers. The story of the making of the *Towards Freedom* volume for the year 1942 is both interesting and tragic. It needs to be told, albeit briefly.

The volume took a long time in the making and has had an unusually long life. It was originally to be edited by Professor Bipan Chandra, who was personally very interested in the year 1942. I am quite certain that, if he was given the option to choose any one year for editing, from 1938 to 1947, 1942 would have been Bipan's first choice. He collected an enormous amount of material for this volume and it would always remain a matter of regret for me that only a small proportion of it could be eventually incorporated in the volume. I was a regular visitor to Bipan's house (49, National Media Centre, Gurgaon, where he settled sometime in 1995 after retiring from Jawaharlal Nehru University [JNU]) and used to be amazed at piles and piles of documents and files in the cupboards, bookshelves, on the stairs, and also scattered on tables and chairs. There was one room in his house which contained nothing else but files and documents. In order to indulge in any worthwhile activity in that room you needed a ladder (to reach up to the documents) and dusters to remove the layers of dust that had accumulated on the files. By measuring the layers of dust you could determine the antiquity of the files and documents. The more the dust, the older the documents. When I enquired from him about the files and documents, he told me that all the documents belonged to the year 1942 and that he would soon compile the relevant documents in a single volume. He had seen all the files and read most of them, which was clear from the fact that each file had research cards attached with elaborate markings by him. I was overwhelmed by the enormity of the task, but given his enthusiasm and involvement, was convinced that he would soon produce the volume.

However, his health in general and eyesight in particular deteriorated very rapidly. He was suffering from macular degeneration of the eye resulting in a steady degeneration in his vision. But he remained optimistic that after treatment and a round of surgeries, his vision would return and he would be able to complete the volume. Not once did he display any sign of helplessness or defeatism. Not once did he admit the possibility that he might not be able to complete the volume. He remained certain and confident. The volume had to be done. And it had to be done by him.

Then one day, all of it changed. He called me and Visalakshi Menon and asked us if we would want to help him complete this volume. He admitted, much to our surprise, that he

had grown old, his eyesight was not improving, and that he found it difficult to concentrate for long hours. We would be joint editors to the volume and our names would appear in the order of seniority—Bipan Chandra, Visalakshi Menon, and Salil Misra. We were both happy to help him in whichever capacity. We were, of course, a bit reluctant in having our names listed along with him and said that we would be happy to be designated as assistant editors. Bipan would have none of it and insisted that all three would be joint editors.

The first day of our involvement with 1942 consisted of a long lecture from him on how the volume on 1942 ought to be organized. Bipan was clear that the volume was not to be an omnibus, unselective compilation of documents related to events that occurred in the year 1942. According to him the importance of 1942 lay in the Quit India Movement. Quit India therefore constituted the axis around which documents were to be organized. The documents were to be chosen keeping in view their proximity to the movement. With his characteristic clarity he told us that, in the choice of the documents, it was more important to be exclusive rather than exhaustive. For the same reason, he was very keen that the volume should begin from December 1941, the meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli at which Congress formulated its stand on the Second World War and serious differences developed between Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The documents in the volume were also to spill over into 1943 and provide to the readers some outline of how the movement lingered on even after 1942. Some of the correspondence between Gandhi, then in Jail in Agha Khan palace in Pune, and Linlithgow, the viceroy, had to be included, as it basically related to the movement. The Gandhi–Linlithgow correspondence had started in 1942 and continued till March 1943. He said jocularly that the editors of *Towards Freedom* volume for 1941 (Arjun Dev and Amit Kumar Gupta) would not mind this encroachment into his period. Also that late Partha Sarathi Gupta, the editor of the *Towards Freedom* volume on 1943, would not have disapproved had he been alive. Bipan was very keen that every important document related to Quit India, in the temporal vicinity of the year 1942, should be included in the volume without being very fastidious about its time and chronology.

As our discussions proceeded, the volume gradually began to acquire shape. Apparently, Bipan had prepared an elaborate outline for the volume and wanted documents to be organized and classified accordingly. Both Visha and I would visit him regularly, pick up the files from his room or the stairs or wherever, and discuss with him the previous files we had taken home. He was at times excited about some document, and sometimes disappointed about the absence or disappearance of some document he had spotted many years ago and was very keen to include in the volume. But excited or disappointed, he was always very interested and involved.

As Visha and I looked up more documents and discovered some gaps, the proposed volume began to outgrow the original blueprint. Bipan realized it and agreed that some changes had to be made in his original scheme. All the documents would be organized not in one volume but in two. The two parts of the 1942 volume would be divided chronologically. Part 1 would deal with the period just prior to the beginning of the movement. Part 2 would include documents on the movement and also on the princely states. The overall scheme was still the same as he had planned. But it was now to be spread out into two volumes instead of one. The current volume consists of documents broadly related to the Quit India Movement for the period just prior to the outbreak of the movement. This is how Bipan wanted it.

Along with Bipan, Visalakshi Menon played the most important role in ensuring that the volume sees the light of day. Immediately after Bipan had spoken to us to become the joint

editors of the volume, she almost instantaneously acquired a missionary zeal vis-à-vis the project. Files were taken home; documents were selected and discussed with me and Bipan on regular basis; new discoveries were made and she was very keen that the history researchers working on 1942 must be made familiar with the new discoveries. In particular, Visha was struck by the proximity that developed between Rajagopalachari, a confirmed right-winger within Congress, and the Communist Party of India during the first half of 1942. She decided to devote a whole chapter to this theme (see Chapter 10).

Visha's own health had begun deteriorating. Her eyesight began degenerating and her kidneys became dysfunctional. Yet her enthusiasm showed no signs of waning. It was almost as if her will power and determination were enough to conquer all the obstacles that came in the way of completing the volume. It seemed that her will had acquired a life of its own undeterred by any constraints. She looked at the documents (with the help of a reading glass) during her four-hour-long dialysis sessions in the hospital, thrice a week. She was discussing *Towards Freedom* before proceeding to Kochi for her kidney transplant, hoping to finish some more work after returning from there. That never happened. Visha kept up a brave struggle and maintained an active association with the volume, which ended on the morning of 8 June 2014 with her passing away. The volume is a tribute to her untiring spirit, unfailing enthusiasm, and never-say-die attitude.

I am extremely thankful to Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, General Editor of the volume, who kept encouraging us. He had taught us in JNU in the late 1970s and it was heartening to discover that, even during *Towards Freedom* interactions, we were able to retrieve and relive our roles as teacher and students, respectively. Professor Arjun Dev was always a warm host at the ICHR and helped me and Visha with the volume in many ways. Professor R. Sudarshan, Chairman, ICHR, and Professor Ravindran Gopinath, the then Member Secretary, ICHR, provided every encouragement and helped the volume see the light of day. Antony Thomas volunteered to help and contributed by going through the documents and subjecting them to his careful and meticulous editorial scrutiny. I acknowledge with gratitude the contribution made by Richa Malhotra towards the selection and classification of the documents. The editorial team of Oxford University Press pursued their editorial responsibilities sincerely and competently, for which I am thankful to them. Their prompt and timely intervention pushed me into working harder and faster and prevented a further delay in the publication of the volume. At the initial stage of the volume, before Visha and I joined it, a team of young researchers had helped by collecting documents for the volume, when Bipan was the lone editor. My sincere thanks to them all.

The documents in this volume have been collected keeping in mind the researcher of the Quit India Movement. If the researcher goes through the entire volume, she/he would get a fair idea about the general background, the contributory factors, the role of Cripps Mission, major debates within and outside Congress, major transformation in Gandhi's response from extreme reluctance to a fierce determination to launch Quit India, and the immediate circumstances preceding the Quit India Movement. In other words, the researcher will become familiar with the story of the movement starting from the Congress Working Committee session in Bardoli till the actual launching of the movement. This is exactly the manner in which Bipan and Visha would have liked to introduce this important theme to the readers of the volume. The fact that this volume could not reach its readers in their presence remains a great source of sadness for me. It is therefore to the memory of Bipan and Visha that this volume is dedicated.

Abbreviations

ACH	Archives of Contemporary History
AICC	All India Congress Committee
AIKC	All India Kisan Conference
AIKS	All India Kisan Sabha
AISA	All India Spinners Association
AISF	All India Students Federation
AITUC	All India Trade Union Congress
AIWC	All India Women's Conference
ARP	Air Raid Precautions
BHU	Benaras Hindu University
COD	Central Ordinance Department
CPI	Communist Party of India
CSP	Congress Socialist Party
CWC	Congress Working Committee
<i>CWMG</i>	<i>Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</i>
<i>CWSVP</i>	<i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i>
DCC	District Congress Committee
FR	Fortnightly Reports
<i>IAR</i>	<i>Indian Annual Register</i>
MSA	Maharashtra State Archives
NAI	National Archives of India
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
PCC	Provincial Congress Committee
PPCC	Punjab Provincial Congress Committee
PWB	Peoples' Volunteer Brigade
RDP	Radical Democratic Party
RTC	Round Table Conference
<i>SWAND</i>	<i>Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva</i>
<i>SWJN</i>	<i>Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru</i>
TNCC	Tamil Nadu Congress Committee
TNSA	Tamil Nadu State Archives
<i>TOP</i>	<i>Transfer of Power</i>
UPPCC	United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee

Calendar of Documents

Chapter 1. The Bardoli Congress Resolution and the Revival of the Congress Organization

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
A. Bardoli to Wardha				
1.	13.12.1941	N.N. Mitra (ed.), <i>Indian Annual Register: An Annual Digest of Public Affairs of India</i> (hereafter <i>IAR</i>), 1941, Vol. 2, pp. 378–9	C. Rajagopalachari's Convocation Address at Lucknow University on Need to Transfer Governance of India to a Provisionally Formed National Coalition Government	1
2.	16.12.1941	S. Gopal (ed.), <i>Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru</i> , (hereafter <i>SWJN</i>), Vol. 12, p. 32	Jawaharlal Nehru's Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon about Extent of Bitterness against British Policy in India	3
3.	22.12.1941	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i>	Newspaper Comment on Differences within the Congress	3
4.	23.12.1941	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i>	Issues Likely to Be Discussed at the Congress Working Committee Meeting	4
5.	28.12.1941	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i>	Deliberations at Bardoli and Congress Inability to Arrive at a Decision	5
6.	30.12.1941	AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (henceforth NMML)	Congress Working Committee's Bardoli Resolution	5
7.	On or before 30.12.1942	<i>Harijan</i> , 18 January 1942, <i>Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi</i> (hereafter <i>CWMG</i>), Vol. 75, pp. 188–9	M.K. Gandhi's Statement for Discussion at Congress Working Committee Meeting	7
8.	30.12.1941	AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML. Also <i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 75, pp. 189–90	M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bardoli, Asking to Be Relieved of Responsibility Placed on Him Earlier	7

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9.	30.12.1941	CWMG, Vol. 75, Appendix I, p. 450	Maulana Azad's Letter to M.K. Gandhi, Relieving Him of the Responsibility of the Congress	8
10.	1.1.1942	IAR, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 30	Editorial in <i>Manchester Guardian</i>	8
11.	1.1.1942	<i>The National Herald</i>	Efforts of Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council to Resolve the Political Deadlock	8
12.	1.1.1942	Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), <i>Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: Transfer of Power</i> (hereafter <i>TOP</i>), 1942-7, Vol. 1, Part 1, pp. 2-3	Excerpts from Confidential Report of Bombay Governor, R. Lumley, to the Viceroy about the Bardoli Resolution	9
13.	January 1942	SB File No. 1018-A-III, Maharashtra State Archives (henceforth MSA)	Congress Meetings in Bombay and Adjoining Districts	9
14.	2.1.1942	Home Political Department File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India (henceforth NAI). Also in <i>SWJN</i> , Vol. 12, pp. 60-1	Jawaharlal Nehru's Address at Malad, Bombay, on Bardoli and M.K. Gandhi	10
15.	2.1.1942	IAR, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 30	Editorial in <i>New Statesman and Nation</i> , London, on Winston Churchill and L.S. Amery	10
16.	3.1.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML	Statement Issued by Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, and Profulla Ghosh	10
17.	January 1942	<i>The Indian Review</i> , A Monthly Journal Published by G.A. Natesan & Co., Madras, January 1942	Editorial: 'Government Must Appreciate Congress Effort and Move Forward'	11
18.	January 1942	<i>Goshthi</i> , Monthly Published by G.V. Subba Rao from Vijaywada	Gandhi Deserved Better Treatment at Bardoli	11
19.	9.1.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. G-2/1942, pp. 277-9, NMML	Letter from A.V.J. Rao, Research Laboratory, Jamshedpur, to J.B. Kripalani, Expressing Dismay at the Giving Up of Non-violence by Congress	12
20.	9.1.1942	<i>The Statesman</i>	Secretary of State L.S. Amery's Speech in the House of Commons, 8 January 1942	12
21.	11.1.1942	<i>The Dawn</i>	Statement of M.A. Jinnah, Interview to the Associated Press of India, Bombay, 2 January 1942	13

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22.	2.1.1942	Rima Hooja (ed.), <i>Crusader for Self-Rule: Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Indian National Movement</i> , pp. 353–4	Text of the Cable Sent by T.B. Sapru and Others to Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, England, at Washington	13
23.	7.1.1942	<i>TOP</i> , 1942–7, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 14	Reaction from the Government: Winston Churchill to Clement Attlee, Telegram	14
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24.	16.1.1942	<i>The Leader</i>	AICC Meeting after 15 Months	15
25.	Undated	AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML	Summary of Proceedings of the AICC Meeting at Wardha, 15 and 16 January 1942	16
26.	15.1.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 75, pp. 219–29	Excerpts from M.K. Gandhi's Speech at the AICC Meeting, Introducing the Bardoli Resolution	18
27.	15.1.1942	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. 12, pp. 74–6	Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru while Moving the Bardoli Resolution	19
28.	17.1.1942	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	T. Prakasam's Opposition to the Bardoli Resolution	20
29.	17.1.1942	<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	C. Rajagopalachari Replies to Critics of Bardoli Resolution	20
30.	15.1.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, pp. 105–7, NMML	Rajendra Prasad's Statement	21
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32.	15.1.1942	Party Letter of the CPI, No. 58, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi	Draft Resolution of the CPI for Wardha AICC	23
33.	18.1.1942	<i>The National Herald</i>	Jawaharlal Nehru's Reply to the Debate	28
34.	18.1.1942	<i>The National Herald</i>	A Summing Up of the Proceedings of the AICC Meeting	29
35.	18.1.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 75, pp. 232–3	M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan	29
36.	18.1.1942	Rima Hooja (ed.), <i>Crusader for Self-Rule</i> , p. 359	Excerpt from T.B. Sapru's Letter to Venkatarama Sastri, Regretting That the Congress Does Not Have Many C. Rajagopalacharis	30

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37.	21.1.1942	<i>The National Herald</i>	Sardul Singh Caveeshar on the Wardha AICC Resolution	30
38.	26.1.1942	Correspondence with T.B. Sapru, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML	B. Shiva Rao's Letter to T.B. Sapru, Commenting on the Wardha AICC Meeting	30
39.	28.1.1942	Correspondence with T.B. Sapru, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML	T.B. Sapru's Reply to Shiva Rao, on C. Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru, and M.K. Gandhi	31
40.	23.1.1942	<i>The National Herald</i>	V.D. Savarkar's Statement: 'Government Has Nothing to Fear from the Congress'	31
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42.	28.1.1942	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. 1, pp. 81-90	Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India on the Indian Political Situation	33
43.	February 1942	<i>The Indian Review</i> , Madras	The AICC's Lead	40

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45.	7.1.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML Also in <i>CWMG</i> , 75, pp. 452-4	Congress Working Committee Instructions regarding Future Course of Action	41
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50.	15.2.1942	<i>The Tribune</i>	Newspaper Report on Maulana Azad's Speech at Lahore	45
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55.	18.1.1942	MSA SB (I), File No. 1018-A-III	Meeting of Congress Legislature Party in Bombay	49
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58.	28.2.1942	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. 12, p. 149	Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Bhulabhai Desai about Working from below Rather Than from the Top in Self-defence Work	51
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60.	5.2.1942	<i>The National Herald</i>	Assam Congress Scheme for Constructive Work	52
61.	First Half of February 1942	GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI	Co-operation between Congress and Muslim League in Belgaum: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay	53
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63.	9.3.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. P-17/1942-6, NMML	Letter from Popatlal Bhoopatkar, President, District Congress Committee, Karachi, to General Secretary, AICC, Marked 'Immediate and Urgent Please', about Cooperation with the City Muslim League	53
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67.	21.2.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. G-2/1942, NMML	Letter from Krishna Ballabh Sahay to J.B. Kripalani and Rajendra Prasad, Hazaribagh, about Problems in Organizing Village Defence Forces	56
68.	Second Half of January 1942	GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI	Protection Committees in Madras Presidency: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras	56
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71.	12.3.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. G-1/1942, NMML	Efforts in Punjab: Letter from Bhimsen Sachar of the Punjab Assembly Congress Party to Maulana Azad on Congress efforts in Punjab	57
72.	Second Half of January 1942	GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI	Initiatives in Delhi: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi	59
73.	31.3.1942	GOI Home Political File No. 73/42, NAI	Translation of a Shorthand Report of a Speech Delivered by Mohan Lal Saksena, MLA, at a Meeting in Sant Nagar, Karol Bagh, Delhi City	59
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74.	5.2.1942	<i>Congress Bulletin</i> , No. 1, pp. 7-9	Congress Working Committee Resolution on Independence Day	60
75.	21.1.1942	<i>The Bombay Chronicle</i>	Bombay Provincial Congress Committee's Programme for Independence Day	61
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80.	5.2.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. P-6/1942, NMML	Excerpts from Report of Congress Work Done by Krishna Ballabh Sahay of Hazaribagh in the Month of January 1942, to Rajendra Prasad (The Report Is a Day-to-Day Account of the Activities Undertaken by Him.)	63
81.	Second Half of January 1942	GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI	Extract from Fortnightly Report for North-West Frontier Province about Independence Day Celebrations in Peshawar	65
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88.	10.2.1942	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 147	Excerpt from UP Governor Maurice Hallett's Note to the Viceroy about Jawaharlal Nehru	68

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90.	Undated	AICC Papers, F. No. P-9/1942, NMML	Note regarding the Work of the Gujarat PCC	70
91.	23.2.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. P-10/1942-6, NMML	News Sheet No. 1 from 'Congress House', Dharwar	70
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101.	7.3.1942/ 8.3.1942	Rima Hooja (ed.), <i>Crusader for Self-Rule: Tej Bahadur Saprū and the Indian National Movement</i> , p. 364	Reply of T.B. Saprū to Shiva Rao, Dismissing the Latter's Suggestions	75

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103.	12.2.1942	Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), <i>Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 123–4	Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Rajendra Prasad about the Money He Has Arranged for Orissa	77
104.	16.2.1942	Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), <i>Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents</i> , Vol. 5, pp. 124–5	Letter from Biswanath Das and Nityananad Kanungo to Rajendra Prasad, Cuttack, about the Bye-elections and Problems Faced by Congress Candidates	77
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108.	12.3.1942	Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), <i>Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents</i> , Vol. 5, p. 137	Letter from Harekrushna Mahtab to Rajendra Prasad, Cuttack, about His Release	79
109.	23.3.1942	Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), <i>Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents</i> , Vol. 5, p. 141	Letter from Harekrushna Mahtab to Rajendra Prasad, Cuttack, about the Success of the Congress Candidate	80

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3.	3.3.1942	Correspondence with Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 5, NMML	Letter from Maulana Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru about the Women's Branch in the AICC and the Need to Create 'Practical Enthusiasm'	545
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9.	30.5.1942	GOI Home Political File No. 188/1942, NAI	Mridula Sarabhai to Jawaharlal Nehru, Enclosing the Draft Resolutions of the AIWC Standing Committee	548
10.	1.7.1942	AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part 2/1942), NMML	Sucheta Kripalani's Tour of Lahore and the Formation of Women's Sub-committees in Lahore and Amritsar and Their Activities: Report of Ram Kishan, General Secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Lahore	551
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21.	23.7.1942	<i>TOP</i> , Vol. 2, pp. 436-7	B.R. Ambedkar: Civil Disobedience at This Time 'Treachery to India': Telegram from Lord Linlithgow to L.S. Amery	558
22.	1.8.1942	<i>The Tribune</i>	Punjab Depressed Classes League's Resolution: Full Confidence in M.K. Gandhi's Leadership	558

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10.	6.2.1942	P.N. Chopra (ed.), <i>Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel</i> (hereafter <i>CWSVP</i>), Vol. 9, p. 94	Vallabhbhai Patel to Ghulam Rasul Kureshi of Harijan Ashram, Sabarmati about Funds for Constructive Work among Muslims	584
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**Chapter 11. Reactions to the War Situation: Food and Cloth Shortage,
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196.	6.8.1942	CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 375–6	M.K. Gandhi's Interview to the Associated Press	950
197.	7.8.1942	CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 377	M.K. Gandhi's Message to China	950
198.	7.8.1942	Correspondence with M.M. Malviya, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML	Telegram from Madan Mohan Malaviya to M.K. Gandhi	951
199.	On or after 7.8.1942	Correspondence with M.M. Malviya, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML	M.K. Gandhi's Reply to Malaviya's Telegram	951
200.	7.8.1942	<i>The Bombay Chronicle</i>	Vallabhbhai Patel's Offer: Echo in Commons	951
201.	7.8.1942	<i>The Bombay Chronicle</i>	States Peoples' Conference Executive Discusses Congress Decision	951
202.	7.8.1942	CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 377–81	M.K. Gandhi's Speech at Bombay AICC Meeting	952

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203.	8.8.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 76, pp. 383–4	M.K. Gandhi's Interview to the Press, Bombay	955
204.	7.8.1942	<i>SWJN</i> , Vol. 12, pp. 454–7	Jawaharlal Nehru on the Quit India Resolution	955
205.	8.8.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 76, pp. 384–96	M.K. Gandhi's Speech at AICC Meeting	958
206.	8.8.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 76, pp. 396–401	M.K. Gandhi's Speech at AICC Meeting, Bombay (Continued)	965
207.	8.8.1942	<i>SWJN</i> , 12, pp. 457–61	'Offer of Cooperation': Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech at AICC Meeting	968
208.	8.8.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 76, Appendix X, pp. 458–61	Resolution Passed by the All India Congress Committee, Bombay	971
209.	Not Dated	GOI Home Political File No. 24/14/1942, NAI	The Andhra Circular: Translation of Cyclostyled Telegu Pamphlet Issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee	973
210.	8.8.1942	<i>The Bombay Chronicle</i>	Viceroy's Council Confers: Four-fold Plan to Meet Congress Move	974
211.	9.8.1942 (5 am)	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 76, p. 403	M.K. Gandhi's Message to the Country, Bombay	975
212.	9.8.1942	<i>CWMG</i> , Vol. 76, p. 403	Another Message from M.K. Gandhi to the Country	976

Chapter 1. The Bardoli Congress Resolution and the Revival of the Congress Organization

A. BARDOLI TO WARDHA

1. C. Rajagopalachari's Convocation Address at Lucknow University, 13 December 1941, on Need to Transfer Governance of India to a Provisionally Formed National Coalition Government

N.N. Mitra (ed.), *Indian Annual Register: An Annual Digest of Public Affairs of India* (hereafter *IAR*), 1941, Vol. 2, pp. 378–9.

Twenty-two years ago, Mahatma Gandhi took the Congress by storm when he showed us a way out of the blind alley of unsuccessful constitutional agitation. If we have a just cause and if we are prepared for sacrifice, he showed us that when the opponent refuses to be reasonable and there appears to be no way but violence to overcome his opposition, there is still a way out of the despair that faces us. He taught us the way of non-co-operation and satyagraha, forms of non-violent attack which we have practiced with a considerable amount of success during the past two decades. This practice has given us something more than objective success. We have gained a feeling of inexhaustible strength which is more precious than any actual achievement, because it sterilizes all defeats and failures, and protects us effectively during every reverse.

No discovery of principles of action, however, can escape the modifications required to environment. No principle can be practiced in this complicated world without compromise, especially when we are dealing not with individuals but with large numbers of men and women and under conditions which have been already made for us and which have created a vicious circle for any remedy to be effectively applied. In the case of the methods of violence we bring the opponents to extinction by a physical process. We overcome opposition by putting an end to the opponent. In non-violence, we bring opposition to an end by bringing about a change of mind. We retain the opponent, but bring his opposition to an end. This change of heart is brought about by the direct method of persuasion wherever that is possible. If that be not possible, we practise self-suffering and through the fundamental laws of human psychology excite reactions of mind that are very real and effective. Direct action operating through embarrassment, and bringing the opponent to his knees by depriving him of his means of strength is not satyagraha, but only a variation of the method of violence. In satyagraha, we do not seek to embarrass by any such physical means. We attack the moral feelings of the opponent and try to rouse his innate sense of right and give him a mental distress for which

he will find relief by doing the right thing. In applying this rule, then, there must be numerous limitations and many necessary variations on account of the actual conditions under which we have to work. It was recognised long ago that we cannot hope straightaway to abolish all international competition and greed and consequent international wars. It was also recognised long ago that the protection of person and property against unsocial elements would have to continue to call for the application of force. It was seen also that non-killing would in practice require the admission of numerous exceptions in the interest of sanitation and health. These and other modifications in the practice of non-violence do not mean that we simply cast the principles of non-violence to the winds. We keep our face turned steadily in the direction of Ahimsa, but only do not commit the mistake of killing the principle itself by opposing it to commonsense and hard reality.

The defence of India is, according to some of us a case to be treated as an exception. The issue did not come up in so many terms at any time before this, but all the same the exception was not unrecognized. Now, however, the issues that have emerged on account of the present war and the attitude of Britain towards the rightful claim of India to independence could not be dealt with without facing this problem of non-violence in relation to national defence. Gandhiji stands for total opposition to all war. But some of us feel that our struggle cannot simultaneously bear the weight of two such major issues, the issues of British control over India and the demand for its total removal, and the issue of non-participation in war, total and irrespective of equity or policies of alliance to secure just ends. Surely, we cannot hope for emancipation at the hands of Britain's enemies. We are held in bondage by Britain, and we must limit our problem to operating on the British mind. A compromise becomes therefore inevitable on the issue of non-participation in all wars. The ending of war as a means of attaining international justice should be tackled some time, but not simultaneously with our national struggle which has come up to the very point of solution and which only awaits one or two wise steps to reach complete success.

The just and reasonable demand of the Indian people is that the governance of India should be fully transferred now, during this war, and indeed more especially on account of this war, to a provisionally formed national coalition government. Even from the point of view of mere efficiency the present unconstitutional and wholly undemocratic arrangement at the Centre and in most of the Provinces is a fatally weak arrangement, and will crumble at the onslaught of real danger. Ignoring the just and reasonable demand of India, Britain cannot get the free and willing co-operation of India, the India either of the National Congress or of the Muslim League. On anything but this basis, it can only coerce and exploit, it cannot get co-operation. The Congress and the Muslim League agree cent per cent on this stand and no sophistry can hide this from the intelligent world. The absence of a political settlement between the National Congress and the Muslim League cannot wipe out the glaring fact of a consensus of opinion on this vital point as against Britain.

There are some people for whom the deciding consideration is success. They feel it a disgrace to take up a stand and make a proposal which is turned down by the British Government which coercively holds the dominant position. I do not agree with this. The methods of non-violence cannot permit withdrawal from a correct position, for the mere reason that it is not agreed to be the opponent. If we have faith in the fundamentals of non-violent methods, we should make our minimum demand and stick to it in spite of every seeming disappointment.

There are again some whose heart is turned towards chaos in the deliberate maturing of which alone they see scientific hope for the future of our country. They must oppose anything

that would retard the progress of such fermentation of chaos. It is hardly necessary for me to say that while we must face chaos when it comes, it is not the way deliberately to follow or work for.

Well, this is the difference. If I have not made matters more concretely clear, it is because I have to avoid going into details and cannot take you into active politics.

I have not been quite an insignificant colleague of Gandhiji. I have worked with him these twenty-two years and feel the just pride of having helped him substantially to develop and put into action his principles and methods. Many are the ties that bind me to him, and it is not a pleasure to discover a difference and recognize it as leading to a parting of ways. But prayerfully and in all humility must we face such a recognition if it must come.

2. Jawaharlal Nehru's Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon, 16 December 1941, about Extent of Bitterness against British Policy in India

S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (hereafter *SWJN*), Vol. 12, p. 32.

Your cable.¹

I am just going to Bombay thence Bardoli. Your information about developments here misleading. Extreme bitterness here against British policy in India and attitude obscurantist and reactionary of officials. While fully realizing its implications recent international events consider recognition of independence with real transfer of power an essential prerequisites for effective step. Undesirable your interviewing British officials.

Nehru

¹ In his cable of 15 December 1941, Krishna Menon asked Jawaharlal to take positive initiative in national leadership and government at the time of imminent peril. He desired that Congress should participate in war effort without insisting on legal, constitutional changes. He wanted that India should discharge her historical role alongside Russia and China, and therefore mobilize people and resources against fascism despite government's obscurantism.

3. Newspaper Comment on Differences within the Congress

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22 December 1941.

Editorial: 'Where Obstacles Lie'

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru agree, apropos of the controversy raised by Mr. Rajagopalachari in his recent Convocation address to the Lucknow University, that the issue before the Congress at the present moment is not one of violence *versus* non-violence. Maulana Azad adds that the main obstacle to the solution of the Indian deadlock is the British Government's attitude towards the country. It appears, therefore, that while the Congress President and Pt. Nehru desire earnestly in this grave crisis to keep the issue of violence *versus* non-violence in the background and frame Congress policy in terms of the Bombay resolution of September 1940, Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Rajagopalachari want, each in his own way, to force that issue in order that no confusion may exist as to the Congress's definite stand in this respect.



4. Issues Likely to Be Discussed at the Congress Working Committee Meeting

Amrit Bazar Patrika, 23 December 1941.

Revised Congress Policy

Rajaji's Duty

Air Raid and Congressmen's Duty

Bardoli, December 22

The United Press learns that consideration of the advisability or otherwise of a revised Congress policy in the light of the present political situation in the country with a particular reference to developments in the Far East and the Middle East, the attitude that the Congress is to take towards A.R.P. organizations and the recent developments in paramilitary politics in Assam, Bengal and Orissa form 'inter alia' the subject matter of comprehensive agenda to be discussed by the momentous session of the Congress Working Committee which will be held after 15 months on December 23. As at present arranged the meeting is expected to continue for three days.

Rajaji's Attitude

From talks with Congress leaders who have assembled here, it is gathered Mr. Rajagopalachari, author of the Poona offer will urge the Working Committee to revise the present policy of the Congress and its attitude towards the issue of non-violence. He is stated to hold the opinion that while sticking scrupulously to the principle of non-violence grim realities should not be ignored, and the defence of India which, according to him, is essential at the present crucial juncture in view of the recent developments in the Far Eastern situation must be treated as an exception. The issues that have emerged on account of the present war cannot be dealt with by facing the problem with non-violence specially in relation to national defence. For this purpose he is reported to be favouring removal of the present 'undemocratic' arrangement at the centre and in most of the provinces, and constitution in their place of a truly national coalition government at the centre and a popular government in the provinces during the pendency of the war. Rajaji will, it is said therefore, urge the Working Committee to change its present policy and openly declare in clear and unequivocal terms that it should participate in the preparations for defence of India provided a real transfer of power is effected without delay. Political circles believe that on this issue he has very little difference with Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru whose refusal to participate in India's defence is conditional as revealed in his Lucknow speeches immediately after his release.

Gandhiji, as is well known, stands for total opposition to all war. He according to many, is not prepared to deny the faith of a lifetime, to compromise his attitude to the creed of non-violence under any circumstances. It, therefore appears that there is a sharp difference of opinion between these two schools of thought.

The 'United Press' special correspondent at Bardoli understands that efforts are being made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, to evolve a way out for liquidation of these differences and present a united front to government. But how this could be done remains to be seen



5. Deliberations at Bardoli and Congress Inability to Arrive at a Decision

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 28 December 1941.

‘C.R.’ Differs with Gandhiji
Congress Policy
Diametrically Opposite Views

Bardoli, December 27

After five days’ discussion on the general political situation in the country the Congress Working Committee has not been able to come to any decision in regard to future policy of the Congress. There appears to be sharp difference of opinion between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and members of the Working Committee, led by Mr. Rajagopalachari on the other, on the question of revision of the present programme of the Congress.

Well informed circles point out that the discussions are bound to take a long time in view of the important issues involved and the diametrically opposite views held by leaders ...

6. Congress Working Committee’s Bardoli Resolution, 30 December 1941

AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (henceforth NMML).

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage, when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India bringing new problems in its train, is a heavy one which the Committee can only shoulder worthily with the full co-operation of the people of India. The Committee have endeavoured to keep in view the principles and objectives for which the Congress has stood during these past many years and considered them in the larger context of world conditions and world freedom. The Committee are convinced that full freedom for the people of India is essential even, and more especially, in the present state of world turmoil, not only for India’s sake but for the sake of the world. The Committee also hold that real peace and freedom can only be established and endured on the basis of world co-operation between free nations.

The Committee gave full expression to their attitude towards the war in their statement issued on September 14, 1939, wherein they condemned Nazi and Fascist aggression and expressed their willingness to help the cause of freedom and democracy, provided the objectives of the war were clearly stated and acted upon, in so far as was possible, in the present. If freedom and democracy were those objectives, then they must necessarily include the ending of imperialism and the recognition of the independence of India. Subsequent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government and their reactionary and oppressive policy made it clear that this Government was determined to maintain and intensify its imperialist hold and exploitation of the Indian people. British policy was one of deliberate insult to Indian

nationalism, of a perpetuation of unrestrained authoritarianism, and the encouragement of disruptive and reactionary elements. Not only has every offer made by the Congress for an honourable compromise been rejected, but public opinion voiced by organizations regarded as moderate has also been flouted.

The Congress was, therefore, compelled, in order to defend the honour and the elementary rights of the Indian people and the integrity of the nationalist movement, to request Gandhiji to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. Mahatma Gandhi desirous of avoiding embarrassment to his opponent as far as possible, especially during the perils and dangers of war, limited the satyagraha movement which he started to selected individuals who conformed to certain tests he had laid down. That satyagraha has now proceeded for over fourteen months and about twenty-five thousand Congressmen have suffered imprisonment, while many thousands of others who offered satyagraha in the Frontier Province and elsewhere were not arrested. The Committee desires to express their respectful appreciation of Gandhiji's leadership and of the response of the nation to it, and are of opinion that this has strengthened the people.

Throughout this period the attitude of the British Government has been hostile to Indian freedom and it has functioned in India as a completely authoritarian government, insulting the deeply cherished convictions and feelings of the people. Neither the professions of freedom and democracy, nor the perils and catastrophes that have come in the wake of war, have affected this attitude and policy, and such changes as have taken place have been for the worse.

The recent release of a number of political prisoners has no significance or importance, and the circumstances attending it, and official pronouncements made, make it clear that it is not connected with any change of policy. Large numbers of detenus, who are kept in prison under the Defence of India Act without trial, and whose only offence seems to be that they are ardent patriots impatient of foreign rule and determined to achieve the independence of the country, still remain in prison. Recent arrests of prominent persons and their treatment in prison also indicate that the old policy is being pursued as before.

While there has been no change in Britain's policy towards India, the Working Committee must nevertheless take into full consideration the new world situation that has arisen by the development of the war into a world conflict and its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the people who are the subject of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom. But only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war. The whole background in India is one of hostility and of distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism.

The Committee is, therefore, of opinion that the resolution of the A.I.C.C passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940, holds today and defines Congress policy still.



7. M.K. Gandhi's Statement for Discussion at Congress Working Committee Meeting (On or before 30 December 1941)

Harijan, 18-1-42, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (henceforth *CWMG*), Vol. 75, pp. 188-9.

So far as I am concerned, even if I was given the utmost power conceivable, even if I was made the Viceroy of India today, would I ask the people of India to take up the sword to keep the Empire alive? I for one should feel that I was committing moral suicide in that I would be abandoning the faith of a lifetime, the faith which I had persuaded the Congress to accept for twenty years as a policy. The steady unflinching pursuit of that policy has brought us quite close to the achievement of the objective. Am I to abandon the very boat which has brought me quite close to the shore? Yudhishtira¹ would not forsake his faithful dog and enter the gates of heaven without him. For he knew that the Kingdom of Heaven would be as naught to him without the dog, i.e., his faith. Would the Arab (i.e., the Congress) give up towards the end of the journey the faithful steed (i.e., non-violence) that had made it possible for [him] to make that journey? It would be an act of betrayal or faithlessness on my part. Could I, when the war is at my door and when I am in the same predicament as they, forget the sovereign remedy I suggested to them and clutch at the method I have denounced and discarded? No matter what the country would say, what should be the attitude of individual Congressmen who had sworn by the method of non-violence?

¹ The eldest of the Pandava brothers in the Mahabharata.

8. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bardoli, 30 December 1941, Asking to Be Relieved of Responsibility Placed on Him Earlier

AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML. Also *CWMG*, Vol. 75, pp. 189-90.

Dear Maulana Sahib,

In the course of discussion in the Working Committee, I discovered that I had committed a grave error in the interpretation of the Bombay Resolution. I had interpreted it to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all wars on the ground principally of non-violence. I found to my astonishment that most members differed from my interpretation and held that the opposition need not be on the ground of non-violence. On re-reading the Bombay Resolution I found that the differing members were right and that I had read into it a meaning which its letter could not bear. The discovery of the error makes it impossible for me to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to war effort on grounds in which non-violence was not indispensable. I could not, for instance, identify myself with opposition to war effort on the ground of ill will against Great Britain. The resolution contemplated material association with Britain in the war effort as a price for guaranteed independence of India. If such was my view, and I believed in the use of violence for gaining independence and yet refused participation in the effort as the price of that independence, I would consider myself guilty of unpatriotic conduct. It is my certain belief that only non-violence can save India and the world from self-extinction. Such being the case, I must continue my mission whether I am

alone or assisted by an organization or individuals. You will, therefore, please relieve me of the responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay Resolution. I must continue civil disobedience for free speech against all war with such Congressmen and others whom I select and who believe in the non-violence I have contemplated and are willing to conform to prescribed conditions.

I will not, at this critical period, select for civil disobedience those whose services are required to steady and help the people in their respective localities.

9. Maulana Azad's Letter to M.K. Gandhi, 30 December 1941,
Relieving Him of the Responsibility of the Congress
CWMG, Vol. 75, Appendix I, p. 450.

The Working Committee have received the ... letter from Gandhiji and recognize the validity of the point he has raised and therefore relieve him of the responsibility laid upon him by the Bombay Resolution referred to by Gandhiji. But the Committee assure him that the policy of non-violence adopted under his guidance for the attainment of *swaraj* and which has proved so successful in leading to mass awakening and otherwise will be adhered to by the Congress. The Working Committee further assure him that it would like to extend its scope as far as possible even in free India. The Committee hope that Congressmen will render him full assistance in the prosecution of his mission, including the offering of civil disobedience.

10. Editorial in *Manchester Guardian*, 1 January 1942
IAR, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 30.

Mr. Gandhi has asked the Working Committee of the Congress to release him from his leadership and the Committee has agreed. If, therefore, the Congress has any idea of considering fresh negotiations with the Government it is freed from what was a false position.

11. Efforts of Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council to
Resolve the Political Deadlock
The National Herald, 1 January 1942.

New Delhi, December 31

Indian members of the Viceroy's Council led by Mr. Aney, I learn, propose to urge the Viceroy at the meeting of the Executive Council on Saturday next in Calcutta to make another move for a settlement of the political deadlock and invite political leaders, particularly Congress and Muslim League leaders to evolve a wartime arrangement for cooperation on the basis of a national coalition Government at the centre and in the provinces. How far they will succeed remains to be seen because despite pressure in Parliament and the press in England, Whitehall is presided over by Mr. Amery and the British War Cabinet under Mr. Churchill's leadership has not hitherto shown any inclination to change its India policy.



12. Excerpts from Confidential Report of Bombay Governor,
R. Lumley, to the Viceroy, 1 January 1942, about the
Bardoli Resolution

Nicholas Mansergh (ed.), *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: Transfer of Power* (hereafter *TOP*), 1942-7, Vol. 1, Part 1, pp. 2-3.

.... The dropping of non-violence ... is a sound move from the Congress point of view. It will gain them some adherents. Already Mr. N.C. Kelkar, an old and, at one time, a powerful political figure in Poona, has announced that, with the dropping of non-violence he now feels able to go all the way with Congress. The public mind, too, is being made to think, by the nationalist press, that Congress has made a very generous gesture. The week's deliberations at Bardoli have in fact, produced a clever setting of the stage. Congress appears as realistic and generous. It has even gone so far as to drop the Mahatma, the greatest sacrifice it could make, in an attempt to compromise at a critical stage in the war. If the British Government fails to respond, 'arrogant Imperialism' will once again have banged the door. That, I believe, is what Nehru hopes to stage, while Rajagopalacharia hopes that we will bargain.

13. Congress Meetings in Bombay and Adjoining Districts, January 1942
SB File No. 1018-A-III, Maharashtra State Archives (henceforth MSA).

Following recent Congress activities at Bardoli meetings held under Congress auspices numbered 58, the largest being those held at Malad, Bombay Suburban District (4,000) on January 2nd; at Sholapur (1,200) also on January 2nd; and at Surat (1,000) on January 6th. Two meetings, each attended by about 600 persons, were held at Nasik on December 21st and at Bhiwandi, Thana district on January 1st. The attendance at the remaining 53 meetings was below 500.

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU visited the Ahimsak Vyayam Mandal at Malad, Bombay Suburban district and spoke on the present political situation to an audience of about 4,000.... [See next item.]

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD, addressing a meeting attended by about 1,000 persons in Surat City on January 6th, declared that lasting peace was an impossibility unless every country and every individual believed in non-violence. He then appealed to Congress workers to carry the Congress message into the most remote villages and to represent the benefits of cottage and village industries....

B.G. KHER addressed 6 meetings with audiences ranging from 100 to 600 in Thana district when he spoke on the economic condition of India, the present war and other miscellaneous subjects.

S.D. DEO addressed 2 meetings in East Khandesh district on January 1st and 3rd when he blamed Government for not changing their attitude towards India at the present critical stage of the war and advised the people not to lose faith in the Congress on account of the A.I.C.C.'s decision and Gandhi's *laissez faire* attitude....



14. Jawaharlal Nehru's Address at Malad, Bombay, on Bardoli and M.K. Gandhi, 2 January 1942

Home Political Department File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India (henceforth NAI). Also in *SWJN*, Vol. 12, pp. 60–1.

Some of the facts about the session of the Congress Working Committee are being distorted by some newspapers. It is not true that there is a split between the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. The present Congress which is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi cannot afford to be separated from him. I myself have immense faith in him.

India cannot help the British in this war until and unless the question of the freedom of this country is satisfactorily solved. No slave country can help others for the liberation of other countries. Everybody in this country should be able to defend himself and his property against any aggression. For this purpose I am prepared to discard the principle of non-violence and instead prefer freedom.

Mahatma Gandhi may carry on the satyagraha on his own initiative and not on behalf of the Congress.

15. Winston Churchill and L.S. Amery Should Not Let This Opportunity Slip By: Editorial in the *New Statesman and Nation*, London, 2 January 1942

N.N. Mitra, *IAR*, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 30.

The impact of the war on the Congress and the retirement of Mr. Gandhi are events of the greatest interest and significance. We hope that Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery will not once again let the opportunity slip by being content to plead the still unresolved conflict between the Hindus and the Moslems.

16. Statement Issued by Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, and Profulla Ghosh, 3 January 1942

AICC Papers, File no. P-1(Part 2)/1942, NMML.

...Whatever may be the interpretation of the Bombay resolution, the condition of the countries involved in the War leaves no doubt whatsoever in our mind today that it would be nothing short of a calamity for the Congress to abandon non-violence on any account. For by doing so we lose everything including what we have achieved for the last 20 years.

The question then naturally arises why, holding the view we do, we refrained from asserting ourselves and resigning from the Working Committee. This we did because most of us signatories had in our representative capacity gone by the interpretation of the Bombay resolution not accepted by Gandhiji. We as individuals, however, are believers in out and out non-violence. Our colleagues know our view. They have left us free to hold and propagate it. Non-violence as the official policy of the Congress holds even to-day. The working Committee resolution contemplates association in the present war in the remote contingency of the British Government making an offer acceptable to the Congress. If that happens we cannot, of course, remain in the Working Committee.

The A.I.C.C. will soon meet. Ordinarily the A.I.C.C. is expected to endorse Working Committee resolutions. We think there is or should be no such convention in this case where there are sharp divisions of opinion. Every member is expected to use his independent judgment and make his choice irrespective of party loyalty. We do not propose to do any personal canvassing. There should be no unthinking imitation. We feel that the Working Committee will welcome rejection of its resolution if the A.I.C.C. holds that the contemplated abandonment of non-violence is against the interests of the country and, therefore, the Congress, principally on that ground, should not participate in the war effort. On the other hand if the members have the conviction that the interests of the country demand such participation they should whole-heartedly support the Working Committee resolution.

17. Editorial: Government Must Appreciate Congress Effort and Move Forward

The Indian Review, A Monthly Journal Published by G.A. Natesan & Co., Madras, January 1942.

After eight days' continuous discussion at Bardoli, the Congress Working Committee has come to important decisions For one thing the Congress has definitely moved away from the impracticable allegiance to the Gandhian ideal of non-violence which for twenty years has held sway over that body. By relieving Gandhiji—at his own request—of his responsibility for leadership and abandoning non-violence in the face of the Axis threat, Congress as a body, has paved the way for co-operation in war effort.... Like a wise leader, Gandhiji has sensed the mind of the Congress and gracefully retired leaving the Congress free to work its own way.

The main purpose of this important decision is to leave the door open for negotiations with the Government. That must be plain enough to anyone who reads the statement. The Congress President invites 'the Government to alter their policy' so that the Congress may quickly respond. The next step is, therefore, with the Government and if only they will do their bit, there is no reason to fear that things will not right themselves in the end. It must be remembered that Congress has made tremendous sacrifice in dispensing with its great and tried leader and it is for the Government to appreciate the effort and move forward.

For, it must be clear that the Advisory regime has failed to be either efficient or popular. Section 93 which was meant to be a stop-gap has come to stay and we know how it has bungled in Bihar and Sind. At a time when danger threatens our very door and people are apt to get panicky, the place of the national leaders is with the people. No time should be lost in calling them to their rightful place in the governance of the country, so that the whole might of the nation may be mobilized for the supreme need of the hour—to repel the enemy.

18. Gandhi Deserved Better Treatment at Bardoli

Goshthi, Monthly Published by G.V. Subba Rao from Vijaywada, January 1942.

We are publishing elsewhere the letter of Mahatma Gandhi to the Congress President, and from a perusal of its contents, we are sure, everybody will be forced to exclaim: 'Friends, my God! Save me from my friends!'

'Goshti' readers are aware that we have been relentless ourselves in our criticism of Mahatma Gandhi's methods all these years. And yet, our blood-curdling, breast-beating, Gandhites, who,

in season and out of season, have cried hoarse about Mahatma Gandhi and his teachings; put on the 'Gandhi Cap'; worshipped his Charka on their Flags; swore by his Satyagraha; and even utilized his great name for their petty Panchayat and other elections—where are they now? One after another, they have all but deserted him and left him once again to pursue a solitary path with such of his admirers and adorers as may be found needless for the Congress purposes.... But whatever the A.I.C.C. does or does not do tomorrow at Wardha, as honest dissenters from the Gandhian cult, we deem it our duty to record both before God and Man that Gandhiji, as a prophet, deserved a better treatment of the Congress leaders at Bardoli; and to technical and legal and almost trivial interpretations of clauses (a), (b) or (c) should have been allowed to mark the parting of the ways between the Mahatma and his erstwhile so-called disciples and followers. We are candid enough to admit that we are not one of 'the gang' and at a time when almost everybody has deserted him shall we not out of respect to the self-same truth which both the Mahatma and ourselves adore, say, for once, and much more truly than most of and much more truly than most of his Chelas, the beloved Mantra of 'MAHATMA GANDHI KI JAI'.

19. Letter from A.V.J. Rao, Research Laboratory, Jamshedpur, 9 January 1942, to J.B. Kripalani, Expressing Dismay at the Giving Up of Non-violence by Congress
AICC Papers, File no. G-2/1942, NMML.

The Bardoli Resolution is creating the fear in many that if Indian independence is guaranteed by Britain, the Congress would raise up armies and materials to fight alongside with Britain. If this fear only comes true, there will be no major country in the world that not only preaches world disarmament but acts up to it; as such, it will be highly deplorable if the Congress goes farther than morally associating with Britain and Allies to accelerate a speedy conclusion of war—but not to accelerate it. The whole world looks to India for light in this direction and it does little behove India to plunge into darkness. After 20 years pursuance of non-violence, a deviation at this critical juncture—the real and appropriate time to demonstrate to the world the potentiality and effectiveness of non-violence for the establishment of world peace, is nothing short of recantation of the creed that built us.

20. Secretary of State L.S. Amery's Speech in the House of Commons, 8 January 1942
The Statesman, 9 January 1942.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery, in the House of Commons today stated: 'I have noted the resolutions passed by leaders of the political parties in India towards the end of December and various statements made by political leaders in connection therewith, but I regret I cannot discover in them any satisfactory response to the Viceroy's recent appeal for unity and co-operation in the face of common danger. Government will not abate their efforts to promote that measure of agreement which is essential to the fulfillment of their pledges in India, pledges which though given independently of the Atlantic Charter, are in accord with the general principle affirmed in that declaration.'

... 'I am afraid the resolutions to which you refer were far from being unanimous. The resolutions of the Muslim League and the Congress are in direct contradiction to each other.'

... 'We cannot make further progress constitutionally in India until there is some willingness on the part of the leading parties to work together. It is not in our power to bring them together.'

21. Statement of M.A. Jinnah, Interview to the Associated Press of India, Bombay, 2 January 1942

The Dawn, 11 January 1942.

My attention has been drawn to the Congress resolutions, passed recently at Bardoli, and it is very difficult for me to understand what those resolutions really mean, except as I understand, that they have not moved by a hair's breadth from the original demand for an immediate unconditional declaration of India's independence and freedom with the right of the people to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly, to be elected by means of adult franchise on the basis of a united and democratic India. This clearly means setting up of the Hindu Raj, which Muslim India will never accept.

Muslim India is fighting and struggling for survival and for its right to self-determination, whereas Congress and other Hindu organizations are speeding to establish supremacy and domination over the Muslims as an all-India minority by establishing one central government over the whole of India, and thus to dominate control even those zones where the Muslims are in a solid majority and interfere even in their internal affairs by virtue of the vital powers which must remain vested in the central government, such as Defence, Communications, Customs and Finance and various other executive and administrative powers.

B. THE SAPRU PROPOSAL

22. Text of the Cable Sent by T.B. Saprú and Others on 2 January 1942 to Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, England, at Washington

Rima Hooja (ed.), *Crusader for Self-Rule: Tej Bahadur Saprú and the Indian National Movement*, pp. 353–4.

The gravity of the international situation compels some of us who have spent long years in the public life of India to make this appeal to you, Prime Minister, to realize the urgent necessity for transforming the entire spirit and outlook of the administration in India. Detailed discussions of the question of the permanent constitution may well wait for more propitious times, until after victory has been achieved in this titanic struggle against the forces which threaten civilization.

But some bold stroke of courageous statesmanship is called for without delay in India, at this hour of growing danger to her safety, to enlist her whole-hearted and active cooperation in intensifying the war effort. Millions of men and women are required for the adoption of effective measures designed to protect the civilian population. The heart of India must be touched, to rouse her on a nation-wide scale to the call for service, undistracted by internal and domestic differences.

Is it not possible for you to declare at this juncture that India will no longer be treated as a Dependency to be ruled from Whitehall, and henceforth her constitutional position and powers will be identical with those of other units in the British Commonwealth? Such a declaration should, we suggest, be accompanied by concrete measures calculated to impress the people that in cooperating with the war effort they are safeguarding their own freedom. These measures are:

- (1) the conversion and expansion of the Central Executive Council into a truly National Government, consisting entirely of non-officials of all recognized parties and communities, and in charge of all portfolios, subject only to responsibility to the Crown.
- (2) the restoration, in provinces now ruled autocratically by Governors in accordance with Section 93 of the Government of India Act, of popular governments broad-based on the confidence of different classes and communities; failing this, the establishment of non-official Executive councils responsible to the Crown, as proposed for the Centre.
- (3) the recognition of India's right to direct representation through men chosen by the National Government in the Imperial War Cabinet (should such a body be set up), in the all Allied War Council, wherever established, and at the Peace Conference.
- (4) Consultation with the National Government, precisely on the same footing and to the same extent as His Majesty's Government consult the Dominion Governments in all matters affecting the Commonwealth as a whole and India in particular.

These are all war measures whose adoption need in no way prejudice the claims or demands of different parties in regard to India's permanent constitution. But knowing intimately the feelings and aspirations of our countrymen as we do, we must express our conviction that nothing less than the inauguration of this policy can resolve the crisis in India. The urgency of immediate action cannot be overemphasized. We appeal to you in all sincerity but with the greatest emphasis to act, while there is still time for such action, so that India may line up with the other anti-Axis Powers on a footing of absolute equality with them in a common struggle for the freedom of humanity.

Since this is a matter of great public importance we propose to make it public after it has reached you.

The Signatories are:

The Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (Allahabad), Rt. Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (Madras), Rt. Hon. Dr. M.R. Jayakar (Bombay), Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad (Moradabad), Sir P.S. Sivaswami Aiyar (Madras), Dr. S. Sinha (Patna), Raja Sir Maharaj Singh (Lucknow), Sir Moropant V. Joshi (Amraoti), Mr. Mohammad Yunus (Patna), Mr. T.R. Venkatrama Sastri (Madras), Sir S. Radhakrishnan (Benares), Sir Chunilal B. Mehta (Bombay) and Sir Rahimatoola Chinoy (Bombay).

23. Reaction from the Government: Winston Churchill to Clement Attlee, Telegram, 7 January 1942

TOP, 1942-7, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 14.

... I hope my colleagues will realize the danger of raising constitutional issue, still more of making constitutional changes, in India at a moment when enemy is upon the frontier. The idea that we should 'get more out of India' by putting the Congress in charge at this juncture seems

ill-founded. Yet that is what it would come to if any electoral or parliamentary foundation is chosen. Bringing hostile political element into the defence machine will paralyse action. Merely picking and choosing friendly Indians will do no serious harm, but will not in any way meet the political demands. The Indian liberals, though plausible, have never been able to deliver the goods. The Indian troops are fighting splendidly, but it must be remembered that their allegiance is to the King Emperor, and that the rule of the Congress and Hindoo Priesthood machine would never be tolerated by a fighting race.

2. I do not think you will have any trouble with American opinion. All press comments on India I have seen have been singularly restrained, especially since they entered the war. Thought here is concentrated on winning the war as soon as possible. The first duty of Congress nominees who have secured control of provincial government is to resume their responsible duties as ministers, and show that they can make success of the enormous jobs confided to them in this time of emergency. Pray communicate these views to the Cabinet. I trust we shall not depart from the position we have deliberately taken up.

C. THE WARDHA AICC MEETING

24. AICC Meeting after 15 Months

The Leader, 16 January 1942.

Wardhaganj, Jan. 15

After an interval of 15 months, the All-India Congress Committee met today at Wardha in an atmosphere of relaxed tension and cordiality. Members from various provinces meeting after a long interval exchanged friendly greetings and discussed with easy minds the current issues. There was general unanimity on the main business before the A.-I.C.C.

It is agreed on all hands that the Bardoli resolution will have a smooth passage though there might be a spate of speeches for and against it from backbenchers. A few amendments will be moved but most of which are expected to be withdrawn and the main resolution will be passed by a large majority.

An important amendment tabled is the one on behalf of the Socialist party which will be moved by Acharya Narendra Deo. The amendment runs on the same lines as the statement issued by the party yesterday. It inter alia reiterates opposition to participation in the war under any circumstances though the party's opposition is based fundamentally on political grounds. The amendment expressed the opinion that pledging India's participation in the war as a price for winning political rights will be the greatest disservice to Indian people.

.... Nearly 190 members of the 384 are attending, some 40 members of the A.-I.C.C. are still in prison. A large number of visitors were also present.



25. Summary of Proceedings of the AICC Meeting at Wardha, 15 and 16 January 1942

AICC Papers, File No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML.

A meeting of the A.I.C.C. was held at Wardha on January 15 and 16 in a spacious pandal erected for the purpose. 219 members out of a total of 390 were present. The province-wise attendance was as follows.

Sl. No.	Province	No. of members Present	Total strength of the Province
1.	Ajmer	5	5
2.	Andhra	20	27
3.	Assam	3	8
4.	Bihar	18	41
5.	Bengal	21	51
6.	Bombay	3	5
7.	Delhi	4	4
8.	Gujarat	12	16
9.	Karnatak	8	16
10.	Kerala	4	12
11.	Mahakoshal	15	15
12.	Maharashtra	15	22
13.	Nagpur	5	5
14.	N.W.F.P.	3	7
15.	Punjab	10	29
16.	Sind	5	5
17.	Tamil nadu	18	29
18.	U.P.	27	64
19.	Utkal	14	18
20.	Vidarbha	4	5
	President	1	
	Ex-presidents	4	6
		<hr/>	<hr/>
			390
		<hr/>	<hr/>

Commencing the proceedings Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress president reviewed the events that led up to the Bombay resolution of the A.I.C.C. in 1940 and the individual civil disobedience movement under the leadership of Gandhiji. He also explained the circumstances under which the Bardoli resolution of the Working Committee was passed. Maulana Sahib said that nothing had happened to warrant a change in the country's attitude. We were today exactly where we were fifteen months ago when the A.I.C.C. met at Bombay and passed the resolution on Satyagraha. We had not moved an inch forward. Not that we did not want to move. We wanted control of the government of our country, we wanted freedom and independence whether in times of peace or war. Proceeding he said that he had no doubt that the members present would agree with the Working Committee that nothing has happened during the last

fifteen months to induce Congress to change its attitude to war which was one of complete non-cooperation. That was the Congress position in 1940 and that remains the position today.

The Congress President then explained that there were two alternatives before the Congress: one was slavish submission to the autocracy that rules the country and the other declaration to the world of our attitude to the war which was one of non-cooperation with it unless certain vital conditions were fulfilled. At Bombay, nay earlier the Congress turned a new leaf. It was imperative to give a fight in order to protect the honour and maintain the very existence of the Congress. The movement launched by Gandhiji in terms of the Bombay resolution was of a special kind. It was a representative and selective movement. All the previous Civil Disobedience Movements were mass movements. This one was confined to select individuals. It was not the aim of the movement to embarrass the Government in its war effort.

At Bardoli the events of the last fifteen months were reviewed and stock of the existing situation taken. The outcome of the Bardoli deliberations was before the members.

The Congress president then explained wherein he and many other members of the Working Committee differed from Gandhiji leading to Gandhiji's decision to be relieved of the official leadership of the Congress. Gandhiji was opposed to participation in the war on the pure ground of non-violence whereas they were opposed to it on political grounds. Gandhiji had declared that he would not have the independence of India if secured at the cost of non-violence and on the condition that the country should participate in war. That was not his position or of those who agreed with him. He was prepared to accept the independence of the country at any time it was available, whether in times of peace or under the shadow of war. He would of course make certain that the Independence got or achieved was of the genuine variety. Nothing pained him more than to have to differ from Gandhiji but he could not be false to himself. If the political demand formulated by the Congress was conceded and the country had full and genuine independence he did not think the country would reject it. Though it was a remote contingency it could not be ruled out of calculation.

People had misunderstood the Bardoli resolution, the reason being the simultaneous appearance of another resolution of the Working Committee by which Gandhiji was relieved of the responsibility laid upon him by the Bombay resolution. The two resolutions were independent of each other. It was not correct to say that Gandhiji was relieved of the leadership of the Congress in order to enable the Working Committee to repeat its conditional offer of participation in the war. The resolution of the Working Committee was no more than a restatement of the well known Congress position. The bonds between the Congress and Gandhiji were indissoluble; death alone could snap them....

After the passing of the condolence resolutions the President requested Mahatma Gandhi to address the members.¹

...Jawaharlal Nehru then moved the following resolution recommended by the Working Committee. The resolution was seconded by Rajagopalachari. The Working Committee resolution with a minor change accepted by the Committee was passed, 19 voting against it. Some members of the Committee remained neutral. All amendments moved were rejected.

¹ Given below, in the following item.



26. Excerpts from M.K. Gandhi's Speech at the AICC Meeting,
Introducing the Bardoli Resolution, 15 January 1942
CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 219–29.

I was not a little perturbed when the Maulana raised me sky-high. I do not live up in the air. I am of the earth, earthy....

Please do not think that I am speaking to you from a high pedestal. The simple question is why are we prepared today to discard a thing which we have cherished for so many years.... I am myself not aware what I will do after swaraj. But today you are eager to barter away ahimsa for swaraj. You had taken a pledge that you would win swaraj only through ahimsa, and through no other means. Today you are ready to depart from it. I want to tell you that this bargain will not bring you complete independence. Independence for me means the independence of the humblest and poorest among us. Today we are at the threshold of independence on the strength of ahimsa. For the Congress to abandon ahimsa and to join war is to undo the work of the past twenty years. It is my discomfiture that I could not make you see this.

This is not the time for counting votes.

In spite of holding this view, I stand before you today to plead with you to accept this resolution, and not even to divide the house.... This is not the time when we may canvass support for our groups and seek a vote.... I had once said that everyone would become his own leader after my arrest. Today also you can become your own leaders and think for yourselves. But I want you to remember one thing. I am a man who won't exchange ahimsa even for independence; and yet I am giving you this advice as an exponent of ahimsa.

.... At one time after the Bardoli Resolution, I had thought of dividing the A.I.C.C. and testing how many members supported my view. But as the situation developed stage by stage, as I saw the climate in the country and the criticism of our Congress in the world, I came to the conclusion on the basis of my ahimsa that if I could persuade the A.I.C.C. I should advise them to accept this resolution deliberately and wholeheartedly. My advice to those who agree with me, that is, to those who have faith in total ahimsa, is to remain neutral and not vote for or against the resolution. But if their abstention helps the opponents of this resolution to defeat it, they should vote in support of this resolution and not allow it to be defeated.

I have no doubt that the Working Committee has taken a retrograde step in passing this resolution. Rajaji may not agree, but he thinks I am in the wrong. Jawaharlal also may say that there is no retrograde step in this resolution. But in my opinion this step-back is a prelude to a step forward. A withdrawal sometimes becomes necessary. We have a right to take a step back for jumping forward. Therefore a man who has parted company with you, who claims to be a satyagrahi and in whose life there is no room for tactical manipulations comes to you and advises you to accept this resolution, however, imperfect, because it correctly reflects the Congress mind....

Do not please go away with the idea that there is a rift in the Congress lute.... Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged. This is baseless. Jawaharlal has been resisting me ever since he fell into my net. You cannot divide water by repeatedly striking it with a stick. It is just as difficult to divide us. I have always said that not Rajaji, nor Sardar Vallabhbhai, but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says whatever is uppermost in his mind, but he always does what I want. When I am gone he will do what I am doing now. Then he will speak my language too....

Maulana Saheb has not properly described how this resolution was framed. This is not the resolution as drafted by Jawaharlal. His draft has been materially amended. Rajaji also had a hand in revising it. People have an erroneous impression about Jawaharlal that he never budes from his view. Today at least he cannot get that certificate. He argues vehemently, but when the time for action arrives, he can make considerable compromises. This resolution is a product of a general consensus. The views of all the members of the Working Committee are reflected in this resolution.... The original draft had left no room for Rajaji and his followers to function. Rajaji would like to participate in the war effort if the Government accepted the conditions laid down by the Congress. So he has opened a tiny window for himself. Through this window Rajaji will try to pull Jawahar towards him and Jawahar will pull in the opposite direction. It is no longer open to the Government and the Congress critics to say that the Congress has banged the door against negotiation on the doctrinaire ground of non-violence. The resolution throws on the Government the entire burden of wooing the Congress by meeting its legitimate demands and securing its participation in the war effort. That nothing much is to be expected from the Government is probably too true. Only the resolution puts the Congress right with the expectant world by debunking the criticism that the Congress is an organization of doctrinaires....

27. Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru while Moving the Bardoli Resolution,
15 January 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 74-6.

I entirely agree with the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli.... There is nothing in the resolution with which any member of the A.I.C.C., whatever his views, can disagree.

Some confusion, however, has arisen from Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Congress President and the Working Committee's resolution relieving Mahatma Gandhi of the responsibility of leading the satyagraha movement. Recently frequent references have been made to the differences and 'groups' in the Working Committee and with one of the alleged groups my name has also been associated. I may tell you in confidence that there are not three but fifteen groups. Each individual member of the Working Committee forms a group and such differences are necessary for progress. There are differences between me and Rajaji. He has been emphasizing other points of the resolution. I am, however, proud to move the resolution which will be seconded by Rajagopalachari.

The British administration has been modeled on the lines of the rule of Hitler. The political prisoners have been released, but this has not changed the spirit or the essence of the British administration. Time has passed when India had to be seen through London's eyes. At this stage the talk of coming to terms with the British Government is out of the question.

The question before me is how my country will be free. The instrument for securing this end are the millions of Indians. The idea that I should go begging at the doors of Englishmen for the freedom of the country does not arise at all. I thought that the eyes of Englishmen would open at least in this hour of great calamity. In our country there is indignation in the heart of every Indian against the British.... We see every day how inefficiently they are fighting the war. It is impossible that the problem of India would be solved by Englishmen.

.... Some people are talking about returning to parliamentary activity. The whole idea is ridiculous. Who know what will happen in the next six months? In the face of these uncertain conditions our real work lies in the country—the organizing of every province, town, village and ward for every eventuality, raising volunteers to preserve order and protect the people. There is plenty of work to do. The constructive programme will keep our hands full preparing the country to be self-sufficient.

28. T. Prakasam's Opposition to the Bardoli Resolution

The Hindustan Times, 17 January 1942.

Mr. T. Prakasam opposed the Bardoli resolution maintaining that Mahatma Gandhi's interpretation of the Bombay Resolution was the only correct one and that the interpretation of the majority of the members of the Working Committee was wrong. If they were now only confirming the Bombay resolution there was no need for the Bardoli resolution which ought to be scrapped. He said that the Bardoli resolution was only a 'reflection of the Lucknow Convocation address' and contended that it was worse than the Poona offer inasmuch as it kept the door open for a settlement with the British without even any demand to Britain. Mr. Prakasam maintained that the civil disobedience movement was a great success and said that they could ill afford to repudiate 'for the second time' Mahatma Gandhi's leadership when that leader had raised India from a backward state to the greatest tower of strength in the world on the basis of non-violence.

29. C. Rajagopalachari Replies to Critics of Bardoli Resolution

The Hindustan Times, 17 January 1942.

'Our co-operation is available if the British did the right thing' said Mr. C. Rajagopalachari addressing the AICC this afternoon supporting the Bardoli resolution. He said time and events have changed the international situation but the attitude of the British Government has remained the same.... India was alive to the dangers of aggression, but she was not in a position to render assistance to the victims of aggression. Looking at facts squarely, if India had the means to help she would have helped even at the cost of postponing a settlement of her quarrel with Britain. But India had not. But at the same time it was not wise for a big nation like India to say: 'We have no armies and, therefore, we could not do anything.'

It was a wrong assumption. Four hundred millions of us could do a lot.

.... Some people say: 'We do not know what will happen to the British Government.' What can happen is either success or defeat. If it is success, it will be that our present position would continue. If it is a question of defeat, it will mean that there will be somebody else here. Defeat does not come suddenly like paralysis. It will take time. The defeat of Britain necessarily means our having to face new Powers....

.... 'Are you going to tell the victorious Power that Indian armies were forcibly taken out of India and made to fight? Are you going to tell him that Indian products were forcibly taken out of India and that we, Congressmen in Wardha, passed a resolution against India's participation in the war?' (Laughter)

.... Referring to the parliamentary programme Mr. Rajagopalachari said: 'There is a legend that I am all for the parliamentary programme. You should not make the mistake that when

we talk of the parliamentary programme we are after mere power. It is a matter of expediency. Supposing the Central Government is placed in my hands then I would take it. But if today the Madras Government is given to me without control of the Centre, then I would not touch it. In the present conditions there is no sense in coming to power in the provinces. The parliamentary programme without power, therefore, need not be discussed at all at the present moment. It is out of the question.'

Mr. Rajagopalachari complained that he had been unjustly suspected of mysterious movements and charged of being 'too clever' for the Congress Working Committee with whom he always had his own way. 'On the one hand you say I am too clever for you and on the other you think I am stupid enough to go and seek a settlement with the British Government and feared that I would go and accept anything they would offer. Please be consistent. Do you believe in opposites—how could I be too clever to you the cleverest men in the country and at the same time stupid to those 'incompetent British'? If I am a hunter, please credit me of being a big game hunter—I won't be content with anything less....

30. Rajendra Prasad's Statement, 15 January 1942

AICC Papers, File No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML.

In the course of the discussion on the resolution Babu Rajendra Prasad made the following statement clarifying the position of those members of the Working Committee who did not entirely agree with the resolution and had therefore remained neutral.

'I seek your permission to make my own position and that of some other members of the Working Committee clear regarding the resolution. This resolution opens the door, however, small the opening may be, for armed help in this war, particularly for the defence of the country and for the larger causes which are emerging out of it, provided that British Government accepts India's demands. Our belief is that arms have not settled any dispute in the world nor are they ever likely to do so in future. It is the universal experience of all countries that dependence on arms leads from one war to another. The defeated party starts preparing for another war so that it may defeat the victor and in this way one war lays the foundation of another war and nothing gets settled.... It is politically wrong in our opinion to involve the country in war at this time. Having accepted the path of non-violence the country has made tremendous progress during the last twenty or twenty-two years ...

We do not like to give up this tried principle at this critical time even to a limited extent. We therefore consider that the opening that this resolution provides for armed assistance in this war is not in the best interests of the country and we wish that India should not in this war and on the present occasion also in the least relax its hold of the principle of Ahimsa. We realize at the same time that by merely passing the resolution we are not called upon to take up arms today. That can happen only if the British Government makes a declaration in favour of Independence of India and transfers the responsibility of administration to our people. There appears to be no chance of that happening today. We have not accordingly thought it necessary to resign from the Working Committee. When the British Government opens the way for armed assistance by the Congress, then will be the time for us to make our choice.'



31. Socialist Reaction to Bardoli Resolution: Statement of National Executive of the CSP

The National Herald, 15 January 1942.

In spite of the recent release of political prisoners, the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party is meeting with attenuated ranks. Many of our leaders including Jai Prakash Narain, Yusuf Meherally, Ahmeddin, Achut Patwardhan, Ram Manohar Lohia, Satyawati Devi, Mohanlal Gautam and Damodar Swarup Seth are not out of prison. Over two-thirds of the Congress Socialist Party members of the A.I.C.C. are still in jail. The committee has given earnest consideration to the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Congress at Bardoli. The different interpretations that have been offered on it and the general reactions to it in this country and outside make it necessary for the party to express its attitude.

The most important and significant observation had been made by Mahatma Gandhi who has pointed out that 'the Congress now through the Working Committee, has made it clear that the door is not barred altogether on Congress participation in the war! Mahatma Gandhi and a section of the Working Committee have dissociated themselves from this resolution because of their opposition to participation in war, mainly on the ground of non-violence.

This committee expresses its abhorrence of war and violence, but realizing that wars are inevitable in a society based on exploitation the party has been striving in the measure of its strength to remove the root causes of such rivalries and conflicts. But the opposition to the war is based fundamentally on political grounds. The Congress Socialist Party has consistently held the view that India's participation in Britain's war would never take her to the goal of independence.

Even a free India may not necessarily plunge into the vortex of war, but to pledge Indian participation as a price for obtaining political rights would be the greatest disservice to the Indian people.

The development of the war and the attitude of the British Government to our aspirations have abundantly vindicated the position of the party. The war has remained imperialist. It is further highly unrealistic, and often dangerously misleading to translate our undoubted sympathy into an offer of support to the countries that are victims of aggression when we have not succeeded in asserting our own full freedom.

The Congress participation in the war if and when the Government (in words of Mahatma Gandhi) unlocks the door, will mean the breaking away of some of its influential sections, would weaken the Congress materially, and further endanger the Congress position that would be jeopardized by the Congress involvement in war. It is, therefore, necessary for the Congress to remain rooted to a policy of unflinching opposition to the war. It also needs to accommodate, as ... the Bombay A.-I.C.C. resolution did, both who oppose the war on political grounds and on grounds of non-violence. To separate these two strands which are intrinsically woven in the fabric of the Congress as it has developed in the last twenty years will irretrievably weaken the Congress in the grave situation we are facing ...'



32. Draft Resolution of the CPI for Wardha AICC, 15 January 1942

Party Letter of the CPI, No. 58, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

Draft Resolution for the Wardha AICC

1. The world shaking developments in the war which have taken place in rapid succession in the last seven months beginning with Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union and ending with Japan's aggression in the Pacific and the entry of the U.S.A. in the world war have fundamentally changed the world situation. Not only is the peril of war already knocking at the eastern doors of India, but the character of the war itself has basically changed. After the German attack against the Soviet Union, the A.I.C.C. recognizes that the grave situation requires a re-definition of the Congress policy in the present phase of the war and the chalking out of the plan of action which will not only protect the immediate interests of the Indian people, but further the struggle for independence and enable them to play their role in the battle for world liberation.

New Alignment

2. The events of the last seven months have brought about a new alignment of powers which completely alters the character of the war. The war now being jointly waged by the Socialist Soviet Union, Nationalist China and the peoples of America and Great Britain, against the brutal and deliberate aggression of the fascist powers can no longer be regarded as an imperialist war on the part of the former. It is now a single indivisible world-wide conflict in which a powerful and growing combination of progressive peoples standing for freedom, democracy and peace, are ranged against Fascism and Nazism, the worst form of imperialism which stands for brutal violence, racial arrogance, enslavement and for the destruction of all cultural values of man.

Congress Policy towards War and Fascism

3. The Congress has always expressed its 'entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war, violence and the suppression of the human spirit'. The Congress has always looked with apprehension at the growth of Fascism and fascist aggression as a menace to world peace. The Congress has condemned Japan's aggression against Manchuria and China, Italy's attack against Abyssinia and Germany's annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia, as events preparing for a new world war. The Congress has especially condemned the reactionary foreign policy of the British Government which had 'consistently aided the fascist powers and helped the destruction of democratic countries'. The Congress always sympathized with the progressive forces of Britain, America and France, which in collaboration with the U.S.S.R. and China sought to create a world-wide front standing for peace through collective security and for the preservation of democracy and extension of freedom in order to prevent fascist aggression and to prevent the impending war.

Policy in the Imperialist Phase of the War

4. The policy of the fascist aggressors and their reactionary imperialist abettors, however, were stronger than the unity of the progressive forces. The war which Chamberlain declared against Hitler in September, 1939, was not a war against Fascism, or for the defence of democracy. It was but a culmination of the same reactionary policy of Chamberlain of 'aiding' and 'appeasing' the fascist aggressors so that they may attack the progressive forces of Spain, China, and finally, the USSR. It was this policy which the Congress had condemned. It was the same age-old

policy of Britain imperialism of aiding reactionary forces against revolutionary ones in order to preserve 'the balance of power' in Europe in its own favour and thus protect its mastery over the world. Chamberlain pursuing an anti-Soviet policy had aided and strengthened Hitler at the cost of destroying and weakening the democratic countries like Czechoslovakia and France in the hope that he may attack the USSR. But Hitler impressed by the might of the USSR and deeming that the situation was not favourable enough for such a venture, signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. It was against this betrayal by a fellow-imperialist that the Chamberlain Government declared war against Hitler. That is why Britain's war against Hitler in the first phase, which lasted till the latter's attack upon the USSR, was not a war against Fascism or for democracy but one conducted in pursuance of imperialist aims. That is why the Congress rightly regarded the war in its first phase as one fought for fundamentally imperialist aims and pursued a policy of opposition towards it.

How It Became a Peoples' War

5. The turn in the war came when the reactionary policy of the British Govt. suffered a series of reverses and collapsed giving place to a new alignment of Britain and America with the USSR. It was this policy which was responsible for the speedy collapse of the Western front when Hitler's armies overran Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and finally, France. It was this reactionary British policy of continued hostility to the Soviet Union and of weakening the democratic countries which enabled Hitler to enslave the Eastern countries of Europe, to hold the threat of invasion over the head of Britain, to trample over the liberties of Yugoslavia and Greece and to reduce Hungary and Rumania into mere vassals. The result was that Hitler was immensely strengthened. With the resources of the entire Europe at his hand and having nothing to fear in the western front, he flung his entire military machine against the Soviet Union. He hoped that the reactionary section of the British ruling class being chastened by Hitler's victory and pleased at the attack against the Soviet Union, the base of the world revolution, would come to a settlement with him over the division of the world. Hitler reckoned with reaction but let out of account the power of the progressive peoples and the bond that linked them with the USSR. Instead of an anti-Bolshevik front of Western European countries which Hitler expected to materialize, what came into existence was a united front of the British and American peoples with the USSR headed by their respective governments. The reactionary anti-Soviet policy of Chamberlain which was at the root of the Second Imperialist War was smashed to bits. The new alignment which came into existence was an alliance of the progressive peoples of Great Britain and America with the USSR against Hitler fascism and its allies. The war conducted by it became a just war, a peoples' war against fascist aggression. This is so firstly because the new alignment means a complete reversal of the reactionary anti-Soviet policy which the British Govt. pursued for the last 23 years for the furtherance of its imperialist domination over the world. Secondly, because the joint victory of this alliance would no longer result in an imperialist redivision of the world, thanks to the presence of the USSR in it, but into an all-round peoples' victory and a just peace without annexations. Thirdly, because the new alliance is in essence a mighty united front of the peoples of Europe and America against Fascism, which is developing into a powerful peoples' upsurge and transforming the war against Hitler and his allies into a war of world liberation, ensuring not only the crushing of fascism but the disintegration of world imperialism itself.

Support to the Peoples' War

6. The Indian National Congress recognizes the changed character of the war and realizes that the supreme issue before all mankind to-day is to achieve the final and complete victory of the world front of peoples against Hitler and his allies. The grave situation created by the Japanese aggression in the Pacific and the menace to the eastern borders of India only underlines the urgency of the all-in struggle for the victory of the progressive forces. This is no longer a battle of rival imperialisms to which the Congress and the Indian people could afford to remain neutral or which they could oppose. It is a titanic conflict between the forces of progress and reaction on the outcome of which depends the fate and future of mankind. Imperialism in its most brutal form will have won on a world scale if Hitler and his allies were to succeed. But the victory of the Soviet Union, China and of the progressive peoples of Britain and America on the other hand will not only achieve the final annihilation of fascism but also the crippling of the world imperialism and the liberation of the peoples all round.

7. Therefore, in view of the changed character of the war and in accordance with the policy which the Congress has always adopted towards the progressive forces against Fascism and fascist aggression, the A.I.C.C. declares that it records its full and whole-hearted support to the cause which the peoples of the Soviet Union, of China, of America, of Great Britain and of the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe are defending so heroically against the armies of Hitler fascism and its allies. The victory of this cause demands the free and voluntary co-operation of all the peoples of the world on the side of the anti-fascist front. It requires, particularly at the present juncture, the free and voluntary co-operation of all the peoples of the 500 millions of the peoples of India and Burma in the effort to stem the tide of Japan's aggression in the East. This is necessary not only in the interests of defence of the peoples of Indian and Burma from aggression but also in the interests of making an effective contribution to the achievement of victory in the all-peoples' war against fascism.

British Policy towards India—An Obstacle

8. It is the policy of the British Govt. of perpetuating the enslavement of India which comes up as a major obstacle in the path of achieving victory of the progressive forces over Fascism. The British Govt. has persistently refused to apply its protestations about freedom and democracy (such as those in the Atlantic Charter) in India and has continued a regime of autocratic repression. It has pursued an economic and political war policy in total disregard of the well being of the people. In the industrial and economic field, the British, guided solely by the interests of foreign capital, have refused to take measures to increase the defensive industrial potential of the country as urgently required by the exigency of the war and by the needs of the people. It has used and still continues to use the provisions of the Defence of India Act for the wholesale repression of the patriotic and popular movements and for the complete suppression of civil liberties and democratic rights under the demonstrably false plea of suppressing activities prejudicial to the conduct of war. It has conducted and continues to conduct its war-efforts by methods of coercion of the people and not by their voluntary co-operation, the measures it so far adopted for the military, air and naval defence of the country, are not only ridiculously inadequate but often accompanied by such revolting acts of bureaucratic and racial arrogance as make them thoroughly hateful to the people. In short, the policies the British imperialist rulers of Indian have adopted in the conduct of war and defence have resulted in a situation in which the Indian people are left not only defenceless in the face of dangers and disasters

which the new development of war may bring but left shackled in a manner which makes it next to impossible for them either to organize their own defence or to play their own part in the world struggle against fascism.

Independent Policy of Unity and Action

9. The Congress condemns unequivocally this reactionary policy and declares that it will not prevent the Indian people from adopting a correct attitude towards the present war and from mobilising the power of the people in order to smash the obstacle which prevents them from participating in it and from winning it for our own freedom and the freedom of the world. The recognition of the independence of India and the establishment of the National Government enjoying the confidence of the people and the realization of democratic liberties are essential to transform our general support to the war into an active and effective material co-operation with the same. The Indian National Congress, however, recognizes that these demands cannot come as a gift from the British Govt. but will have to be won through struggle. In the present critical situation of the war, the issue of India's freedom has become one of urgent and vital importance not only to the Indian people but also to all the peoples who are conducting the war against fascism and its allies. The Indian National Congress recognizes gratefully that the advanced sections of the British and American people are raising the question of India's freedom as a part of their struggle to strengthen the anti-fascist front and to win the war. The Congress assures them that it is determined to adopt a positive policy towards the war and to mobilise the people for achieving their free and voluntary participation in the war. This policy of general support to the war and withdrawal of individual satyagraha is not determined either by the recent releases of Satyagrahis nor will it be influenced by the vagaries of the autocratic repressive regime which the Govt. continues. It is determined solely by the interests of the Indian people, by their desire to further their struggle for independence and by their determination to play their part in the world struggle against Fascism. In carrying out its policy it will rely on the unity and strength of its own people and upon the support it gets from the progressive forces of Britain and America and elsewhere....

10. In this situation, therefore, the only correct policy the Congress can adopt is one of forging positive mass sanction, by achieving the unity of the popular organizations and forces in the country which stands for independence of the country, for communal amity and understanding and for effective participation of the Indian people in the world struggle against Fascism. The urgent need of the moment is the formation of the broadest possible joint front, united on the basis of a positive attitude towards the war, determined to mobilize the people through parliamentary and extra-parliamentary actions, aimed at securing the recognition of India's right to independence, of the establishment of a National Govt. at the Center, commanding the confidence of the people. For this purpose, the AICC hereby decides to call off the Individual Satyagraha and cancels the restrictions and bans imposed on the participation of Congressmen in the Legislatures and the local bodies.

Plan of Action

11. The A.I.C.C. therefore calls upon the Working Committee to get into touch with the Muslim League and other major popular organizations in order to achieve joint action and joint front on the following basis:

- (a) The contracting parties agree that the war waged jointly by the USSR, China, America and Great Britain, and the other allies against the fascist powers is in its present phase, just war, which the Indian people must strive to win in common with the progressive forces, such as the Soviet Union, Nationalist China, and the peoples of Britain and America. They fully agree with the war and peace aims as they have been set forth by the leaders of the Soviet Union, namely, the annihilation of Hitler fascism and its allies, securing of a durable and just peace not involving any annexations and a new world order based on the independence and democratic liberties of all peoples, and their mutual co-operation.
- (b) The recognition of the changed character of the war naturally implies that the attitude of the contracting parties towards the war effort even of the present Government can no longer be of hostility or even of neutrality but such as will protect the interests and the democratic rights of the people and further the creating of mass sanctions for winning the major political demands detailed in para (c).
- (c) The contracting parties recognize that the main obstacle in the way of realizing the free, voluntary, and therefore effective participation of the Indian people in this war for the proper defence of the country and ensuring the protection of the people's interests and liberties, is the autocratic and repressive policy of the British Government.

In order to eliminate this obstacle, the contracting parties must take joint action to forge parliamentary and extra-parliamentary sanctions to win the following demands:

- (i) Recognition of India's right to complete independence;
 - (ii) Formation of a National Govt. at the Centre, responsible to the legislature, and commanding the confidence of the people, and having full power over all spheres of government and administration and of the conduct of war;
 - (iii) Release of all political prisoners, detenus, establishment of democratic liberties, the withdrawal of all emergency legislation restriction freedom of speech, press, organization, movement and right to strike;
 - (iv) Policy of rapid industrialization and forcing the pace of industrial production to supply the demands of war and defence and the needs of the people;
 - (v) Granting of workers' demands, the amelioration of burden of debts, rents and taxes, price control in their interest and the generous remission to flood and famine-stricken areas, special aid to increase food grain production, to promote such handicraft production as required to replace shortage of goods due to war (e.g. handloom industry);
 - (vi) No coercion of any form in any type of war effort;
 - (viii) Equitable distribution of war burden.
- (d) The contracting parties agree to run an all India mass campaign of meetings and demonstrations, bringing home to the people the significance of the peoples' stage of the war, showing how the issue of India's liberation now becomes a part of the struggle for world liberation fought in common by the progressive forces of the world. The purpose of the campaign is to rouse the people to support the demands set forth above, the realization of which is essential for the people's effective participation in the war.
 - (e) The contracting parties agree to form stable joint ministries in the provinces pledged to support and implement as far as lies in their power the demands set forth above and to support the extra-parliamentary mass movement for their full realization.

Task of Congress Committees

11. The AICC calls upon the Congress Committee to resume normal activities of organization and of participation in the local bodies. The Congress Committees must in their respective areas undertake explanatory campaigns to bring home to the people the Congress. The Congress Committees must call upon the people and move them to support the main demand that the conduct of the war and of the Govt. must be entirely in the hands of the people's representatives, so that the country and the people's interests are effectively defend and the war conducted and won in a manner that furthers the cause of India's freedom. The attitude of the Congress Committee towards the war effort will be one of vigilance and co-operation so as to strengthen the hands of the popular ministries in their effort to make it more and more popular and controlled and in the interest of the people. They must expose every case of bureaucratic coercion and fight for its elimination.

Conclusion

The AICC realizes that the policy which Congressmen and the Indian people have to follow in the grave and serious situation is an extremely difficult one. We have to realize that the struggle for our own liberation is today closely bound up with the war of world liberation which the USSR, China, and the progressive peoples of Britain and America are waging in five continents and which is now knocking at our door. The reactionary policy of the Britain Govt. binds us down hand and foot and seeks to prevent us from participating in the war, from defending our own homes and interests effectively. The cause of the progressive peoples of the world, the cause of our own liberation demands that we exert ourselves to smash this obstacle which prevents us from playing our rightful role. It would be unworthy of us as a great people, unworthy of the traditions of our national struggle if we sat with folded hands and relied upon imperialism, upon the change of heart of imperialist rulers to unshackle us. We have to get up on our own legs and relying upon the inexhaustible strength of our people, put up a fight which cannot but gain for us the place of a free and equal combatant in the giant struggle which is shaping the destiny of mankind and our own. In that endeavour we will have the full support of the peoples of the USSR, of China, and of the advanced section of the peoples of Britain and America.

33. Jawaharlal Nehru's Reply to the Debate

The National Herald, 18 January 1942.

Replying to the debate, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru criticized the tendency to be carried away by slogans and catch words. So far as he could see, Communists, Socialists and Gandhiites were equally victims to that tendency ... The suggestion of Congress Socialists to convene a constituent assembly was in his opinion, impracticable at this juncture though he believed that ultimately a constituent assembly alone would decide the fate of India.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru added that he failed to understand the attitude of those who talked of 'hundred per cent non-violence' but tolerated the present economic and social structure based on violence and injustice and who hoped to build up a new structure by means of bringing about a mental change among the capitalist and propertied classes.



34. A Summing Up of the Proceedings of the AICC Meeting

The National Herald, 18 January 1942.

The AICC today accepted Mahatma Gandhi's advice and endorsed the Bardoli resolution—except for a minor verbal alteration¹—defeating the amendments by overwhelming majorities.

.... Mr. Rajagopalachari spoke with great clarity, humour and frankness. He explained the legends that had grown around him and said he could not be too clever for the Congress and too stupid for the British Government. He contended that there was no difference with regard to the main policy of the Congress but only over the extension of non-violence to national defence ...

Pt. Nehru made a fighting speech. Examining the amendments, particularly the one from the Communists, he declared that they lacked a sense of reality.

A speech of some interest was made by Mr. T. Prakasam who criticized the Bardoli resolution in pungent terms and said that it was a betrayal of Gandhiji.

Mrs. Subbarayan supported the Communist amendment, urging participation in the war.

Babu Rajendra Prasad made a dignified statement on behalf of the non-violence school. He was listened to with great respect.

¹ The alteration was the addition of a sentence extending the sympathies of the Congress to all peoples who are subjects of aggression 'from any quarter'.

35. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan,

18 January 1942

CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 232-3.

DEAR KHAN SAHEB,

Maulana Saheb and Jawaharlal had a long talk with me over your retiring from the Congress. They say that they never understood that you had contemplated withdrawal from the Congress. They said that the talk was plainly about withdrawal from the Working Committee only. They said too that in their opinion your withdrawal even from the W.C. was sure to be misunderstood and would harm the very cause you have at heart. Naturally you are the best judge of the situation. You would give due weight to their opinion. I can have no opinion. I rely entirely upon your judgment on the facts. If the facts are as they say, their opinion should prevail. If they are otherwise and you have no such fear as they entertain, your opinion should prevail.

They further said that you should take no step without the approval of Dr. Khan Saheb and your co-workers. They say too that if you go, Dr. K.S. must come to the W.C. You will now tell me and Maulana Saheb what is to be your judgment.¹

¹ Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan resigned from the Working Committee on 8 February 1942.



36. Excerpt from T.B. Saprú's Letter to Venkatarama Sastri, 18 January 1942, Regretting That the Congress Does Not Have Many Rajagopalacharis

Rima Hooja (ed.), *Crusader for Self-Rule*, p. 359.

... You must have read all the proceedings of the All India Congress Committee at Wardha. Do you still entertain any hope that there is any chance of a reconciliation between the Congress and the Government or that private negotiations with Jinnah on the part of some men belonging to the Congress are going to lead to any result? I have not the faintest hope. The Congress does not consist of many Rajagopalacharis. I suppose there is only one man like him, of his size and stature and he too, as appears from his speeches, is finding it difficult to reconcile the official attitude of the Congress with his personal. Meanwhile the danger to India is increasing day by day. God only knows what is in store for us. We get floods of oratory, logical arguments, perversion of political theories and peculiar readings of history, but we get no solution. The craving for gestures is demoralizing. On the other hand the British Government are equally perverse and will not see things in the light in which they should see them.

37. Sardul Singh Caveeshar on the Wardha AICC Resolution

The National Herald, 20 January 1942, p. 5.

Wardha, Jan. 18

'I am disappointed that the Congress resolution does not attempt to make the best use of the present unrivaled opportunity for the country's freedom, but I am pleased that the Congress is now free of metaphysical and mystical leadership and has come down to the desirable level of ordinary politics'. Thus observed Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar.

He added: 'I expected the Congress, after giving the goodbye to Mahatma Gandhi, to put before the country some active and easily realisable programme. We are organising defence brigades all over the country to meet the present critical situation to help the people both against internal disorders and external aggression. For this we will use all weapons we are allowed under the law. The brigades will not conflict with any Government agency but they will work independently. We shall press the Government to allow the use of arms. This means that we cannot co-operate with the Congress owing to the non-violent attitude of self-denial.'

38. B. Shiva Rao's Letter to Saprú, 26 January 1942, Commenting on the Wardha AICC Meeting

Correspondence with T.B. Saprú, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML.

My dear Doctor Saheb,

I have just got back to Delhi after a fortnight's absence ... I spent five days at Wardha watching the meetings of the All India Congress Committee. It was quite clear to me that the unity of the high command would last only so long as there is no fresh offer from the British side. Mr. Rajagopalachari is anxious for a settlement and pleaded frankly and hard for an attitude of reasonable compromise. Jawaharlal was impatient with any such suggestions. He asked, with whom we were going to negotiate—with an Empire which is crumbling to dust? It sounded

very brave, but I am not sure that it is going to help. If the Mahatma had not repeatedly asked the meeting to endorse the Bardoli Resolution, I think the decision may well have been different. Everyone, whether he agreed with it or not, conceded that Mr. Rajagopalachari's speech was the ablest in the whole meeting. The Mahatma adopted a strange line of argument and said that the supreme merit of the Resolution was that all points of view in the Congress were reflected in that composite resolution and it could be interpreted in different ways. I did not expect that that would have been put forward as a point in favour of the resolution. I left Wardha with the impression that a favourable response from Churchill to your appeal would go far towards removing the deadlock.... I do not think anyone knows definitely what Churchill will say to you. But the tone of his public statements does not inspire confidence; particularly, his suggestion that 'far-reaching issues of a constitutional character cannot be raised during the war' seems to rule out the recognition of India for all practical purposes as a Dominion.

Yours ever,

B. Shiva Rao

39. T.B. Saprú's Reply to Shiva Rao, 28 January 1942, on
C. Rajagopalachari, Jawaharlal Nehru, and M.K. Gandhi
Correspondence with T.B. Saprú, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML.

My dear Shiva Rao,

.... I am interested to hear your account of the meetings at Wardha. I realize that Mr. Rajagopalachari had an uphill task there and I also realize that on the whole he fought very well for an attitude of reasonable compromise. As regards Jawaharlal what you say has not taken me by surprise. I do not think he is going to budge an inch from his position. As regards the Mahatma as time goes on he becomes more and more of a mystery to me....

Yours affectionately,

Tej Bahadur Saprú

40. V.D. Savarkar's Statement: 'Government Has Nothing to Fear from the Congress'

The National Herald, 23 January 1942.

'It is really pitiable to find that all the deliberations, speeches and the main resolution itself of the All-India Congress Committee recently held at Wardha should bear the stamp of nothing but despair and frustration.'

Continuing he says: 'I am surprised on the contrary to find why the Government should so stubbornly refuse to respond to the overtures of the Congress which have been made overtly and covertly ever since the Poona resolution. The Government has nothing to fear while the Congress is led by men like Gandhiji who have been, 'as I am aware', not only pro-Government but sincerely pro-English throughout their life. Leaving aside the active participation with England of Gandhiji and his followers in the Zulu war, the Boer war and the Anglo-German war in 1914, it should be remembered that at the outbreak of this war itself almost all Congress leaders led by Gandhiji, took up an attitude which was pro-Government and pro-English not

only as a matter of policy, but as they themselves declared, as a matter of principle. "If England and France fall" declared Gandhiji in moving tones, "what does it profit us even if India gets independence."

All that the Congress, led by Gandhiji, insists is that in spite of all this wholehearted cooperation they should be allowed to style themselves as non-cooperators and in spite of their willingness to work out the 'national government' as defined in the Poona resolution which did not in any way postulate antagonism to British sovereignty itself—they should be allowed to maintain that unless and until India is independent, it cannot put forth its full strength to help the 'great democracies' which again means Great Britain and her allies. It passes my comprehension why the Government should be so stingy as to deny them to the Congress. The words non-cooperation, 'ahimsa' or independence cannot but be harmless innuendoes as long as they are taken in connection with the policy and principles of the Congress as depicted above. It is, consequently, up to the Government now to open negotiations and give the initiative to the Congress for which it is seeking.

Anyway, it fills my heart with delight to see that the leaders of the Congress have come to realize, as the latest speeches, resolutions of the AICC show, that after all there is very little difference between the imperialism of Great Britain and the authoritarian cult of the Nazis so far at any rate, as India is concerned.

41. Editorial about Congress Plans

The National Herald, 21 January 1942.

The Congress having reiterated its determination to participate in the war only on the basis of guaranteed independence, has closed once again that political volume and put it on the shelf. It has emerged from Wardha united and victorious. It leaves it to Whitehall to do its best or its worst. But it is determined to have its say, if not in war, at least in peace. And if that peace will not benefit India in the manner the Congress desires, she knows what to do. This is the upshot of the Wardha deliberations.... The British Government are cherishing the illusion that if they can win the war, they can also win the peace. Of the fulfillment of this fond expectation the Congress will deprive them, so far as India is concerned.

Good friends like Dr. Edward Thompson continue to advise us to be satisfied with less. The Sapru proposals are so good according to him that if only the Congress and the League support them, even the bad hearted Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery will not be able to resist them. We are not so sure, but we can wish Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his friends the best of luck. We are also advised to be sweepingly generous to the Muslim League, so that we may be in a position to tell the world that we are a united nation and we have religiously fulfilled the grand prerequisite of reforms, namely prior unity. That a Congress-League settlement is called for, no one will deny. That the terms of the settlement should be generous, is equally undeniable. But we must reaffirm our conviction that no settlement will be possible so long as the more important prerequisite of a British surrender to Indian nationalism is not forthcoming. So long as Mr. Amery fills Mr. Jinnah's sails so long will Mr. Jinnah fly the flag of defiance.

The best friend the British Government had at Wardha—we use the word advisedly—was Mr. Rajagopalachari.... A parliamentary programme in the present circumstances would be a ridiculous luxury and an inexcusable waste of time. If provincial autonomy had no meaning with an irresponsible centre, it would have absolutely no meaning if the same state of affairs continued and under war conditions too.

Leaving aside high politics the Congress immediately addresses itself to the more important national question of civil defence, convinced as it is that it is not too safe in the hands of the present Government and that a large-scale effort is required to protect our people when calamities begin to shower upon them. As soldiers of peace and servants of humanity, Congressmen are required to go into the country and prepare the people for protection against unsocial elements, which always wallow in the welter of anarchy. The leaders of the Congress are launching a national campaign for the purpose.

42. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India on the Indian Political Situation, 28 January 1942

TOP, Vol. 1, pp. 81–90.

1. The Real Issue

The political deadlock in India to-day is concerned, ostensibly, with the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. In reality it is mainly concerned with the far more difficult issue of what Indian hands, what Indian Government or Governments, are capable of taking over without bringing about general anarchy or even civil war.

The former issue has been settled in principle by pledge after pledge given in the name of His Majesty's Government, culminating in the Viceroy's definition in January 1940 of the objective as 'full Dominion Status in accordance with the Statute of Westminster', and in the promise of full and equal partnership contained in the Viceroy's declaration of August 1940. That declaration further made it clear that this status of practical independence was to be attained as soon as possible after the war under a constitution of Indian devising. It anticipated in the fullest and most generous sense the general principle enunciated in Article III of the Atlantic Charter. That its fulfillment must necessitate some provision for the carrying out of existing obligations is a limitation which would naturally apply no less to any other case in which effect were given to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

What would be equally necessary in the application of that principle in India or elsewhere is some measure of agreement as to who constitute the people or peoples whose freedom of choice as to their form of government is to be respected. That insistence on agreement is, indeed, an essential feature of the August Declaration. But it is precisely that feature which has brought to the forefront the true nature of the Indian problem, namely, the existence in India, over and above all other local differences, of two great communities, at least as separate, and indeed antagonistic, in culture and outlook as any of the contending nations in Europe. To talk of those two communities as majority and minority is a dangerous misuse of terms, because it tends to imply that the right of the numerically smaller community to have an individuality respected is less than that of the larger. It is, after all, in defence of that right that we are at war to-day.

Yet this fundamental issue has been throughout ignored by the Congress Party—which, in spite of efforts to keep a Moslem element in its façade, is essentially a Hindu Party—in its ingrained conviction that it is the natural heir to the British Government in India, and entitled to take over control both of legislative and executive power, unfettered by any limitations save such 'safeguards' for the 'minorities' as it has professed to be willing to grant.

The issue was, indeed, also largely ignored by Parliament when it based the present India Act on the assumption of the possibility for all-India of a central Government constituted on British lines, and thought that the position of the Muslim community could be sufficiently

safeguarded by separate electorates. Congress was thus afforded an opportunity, which is never likely to recur, of securing effective control of the machinery of Indian Government. But in its 'all or nothing' mood it rejected the Act at the Centre for its essentially temporary limitations upon full independence and for the 'undemocratic' weightage given to the Indian States.

Meanwhile, the experience of Congress Government in the Provinces and of the centralized dictatorship of the Congress 'High Command' finally decided the Moslems, now increasingly coming together in the Moslem League, to reject entirely any system of government for India as a whole based on a Parliamentary majority Executive. The demand for Pakistan, *i.e.*, for the complete separation of the Moslem majority Provinces from the rest of India, embodies this rejection in its extreme form. It is to be hoped that practical considerations will in fact, induce the Moslem Provincial leaders in the end to accept some form of All-India Government over a carefully limited field and under some mutually agreed constitution. But Parliamentary Responsible Government for India as envisaged by the Declaration of 1917 and worked out with such infinite care in the Act of 1935 is, to my mind, no longer in the picture. The solution can, and must be found, but it will have to be found on different lines.

That was the real meaning of the Declaration of 1940 with its insistence upon agreement between the main elements in India's national life. That is why it was welcomed, and is to-day regarded as a solemn pledge, by the Moslems and other 'minority' elements, as well as by the Princes. That is why, in spite of its acceptance of the principle of an Indian-made constitution, the declaration was regarded by Congress as a direct challenge to its whole position, a direct denial of its claim to speak for India. Congress policy since then has concentrated on one main object: to put pressure upon the British Government to go back upon the Declaration of 1940. It is in the light of that purpose that we must judge its past and present political manoeuvres, as well as the efforts of those eminent and respectable Hindu Moderates who, while deprecating the extremist attitude of Congress, have continued to turn the same blind eye to the existence of Moslem India, and to pin their faith on British Parliamentary Government as the only solution of the Indian problem.

2. Party Manoeuvres 1940-1

The opening gambit in the Congress game was the campaign of selective civil disobedience, beginning with the leaders of the Party and intended, by their example, to spread ever wider and wider, impressing both India and the outside world with India's self-imposed martyrdom in the cause of freedom. Starting in October 1940 the campaign gathered some strength in the opening months of 1941, chiefly in the United Provinces, and by May there were some 14,000 satyagrahis in prison. But by then it had already lost momentum. New entrants rapidly declined and were soon exceeded by the release of time-expired prisoners, who in their turn, showed no inclination to obey Mr. Gandhi's injunction to seek re-imprisonment.

Meanwhile, in March 1941 a Conference of Moderate leaders met in Bombay under the presidency of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to look for some way of breaking the deadlock. The real nature of that deadlock was recognized by an initial approach to Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah urging them to come together. But coming up against a stone wall in that quarter the Moderate leaders—nearly all Hindus—at once turned back into the easier and more congenial path of putting His Majesty's Government on the defensive by demanding greater powers to be given to 'India', both immediately and prospectively, without facing the issue how these powers were to be shared between the contending elements.

The demand for an immediate declaration that Dominion Status would be granted within a specified time after the war in effect pushed back upon His Majesty's Government the responsibility for finding and imposing their own solution by the prescribed date, and gave both the main parties every excuse for refusing to come to terms with each other and for disagreeing with whatever constitution might be imposed ... the demand for the immediate transfer of full power to an entirely Indian Executive Council responsible to the Crown alone, but treated as a Dominion Government, simply ignored the manoeuvring for power and position which had previously frustrated the Viceroy's efforts to bring the party leaders together in an expanded Executive, and would no doubt have equally frustrated the offer of seats on a Council with greatly enlarged powers.

Congress, while not indisposed to encourage the Bombay proposals behind the scenes, took good care not to associate itself with them. The Moslem League treated them with contempt, and proceeded in April formally to reaffirm its faith in Pakistan. The practical difficulties in the way of the Bombay scheme, as well as the absence of support from either of the main parties, were set out by myself in the debate on the continuance of Section 93 government in the Provinces in the same month.

3. The New Interim Constitution

At the same time it was generally felt intolerable that the intransigence or exigencies of party leaders should impose a veto on all effective association of Indians with the government of their country in the present crisis. The Viceroy accordingly decided to appeal to individual Indian public men of standing and experience to join his Executive Council, the enlargement of which was in any case desirable on practical grounds, and to join a National Defence Council which, in an advisory capacity, was intended to serve as a link between the war effort at the Centre and in the Provinces and States. The Indian members are in a majority of eight to four on the new Executive, while only one European and one Anglo-Indian figure among the 29 members of the National Defence Council.

The two bodies between them are as fully representative as possible of the leading personalities of every community and of every shade of political opinion in India, given the fact that actual members of the present Congress organization and of the Moslem League are not included. The exclusion of the latter was, however, the result, not of any objection on principle, but of pique on Mr. Jinnah's part, at not having been consulted. By a somewhat unscrupulous use of his almost dictatorial powers in the League, and playing upon the fear of disruption of that body, he forced the Premiers of Bengal, of the Punjab and of Assam to resign from the National Defence council. The Moslem Premier of Sindh, who had already broken with Mr. Jinnah on other grounds, remained, while Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Bengal Premier, has since rejoined, after reconstituting his Government and leaving the League.

The expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council has marked a noteworthy change in the spirit, if not in the legal structure, of the government of India. The whole government of British India, in all its aspects, and not merely the powers transferred to an Indian Cabinet under the dyarchical scheme of the 1935 Act, is now within the purview of a Cabinet with a substantial Indian and non-official majority. The Viceroy and his Executive are, no doubt, subject to the overriding authority of the British Cabinet and Parliament. But that authority has never been lightly or arbitrarily exercised against the considered view of the Government of India, and is even less likely to be so exercised under the new conditions.

The enlarged Executive has, in fact, shown itself a practical and responsible body in which the new members have worked on the best of terms with the Viceroy, with the older members and with each other. They have been responsive to Indian public opinion, but as representative public men and not as party delegates. They have also effectively remedied one of the gravest weaknesses of the Government of India in the past, the absence of Indian speakers both prepared and able to defend the policy of the Government. It is difficult to believe that this practical advance in the government of India by Indians has been without its effect on public opinion, both in regard to the relations between India and this country and in regard to the relations between the two main communities.

No less successful, within its narrower limits, has been the National Defence Council. The opportunity of hearing the heads of every department, from General Wavell downwards, frankly and fully expounding and discussing every aspect of the conduct of the war has made a great impression on all its members, have come back to their part in the local war effort. Princes and Provincial representatives have worked most happily together on this, the first All-India political body. Here, too, it would seem that the beginning has been made, without overt constitutional change, of something that may develop and exercise a real influence on the Indian political atmosphere.

4. Congress in Confusion—The Deadlock Continues

As against these positive steps on the part of the Government the futility of the Congress policy became increasingly obvious to many of the Congress leaders, as well as to the general public. One sign of this was a demand for the resumption of ministerial government in the Provinces, which acquires sufficient force in one Province, Orissa, to enable the Governor to assent to the formation towards the end of November of a Coalition Government, including several dissident congress members. On the other hand, the Coalition Government of Assam disintegrated a month later and the Governor, failing to find an alternative Ministry prepared to support the war effort, was forced to assume control under Section 93.

Once it had become evident that Mr. Gandhi's campaign of symbolic civil disobedience no longer constituted in any sense a real challenge to the authority of the Government, it was an open question whether it was worth while keeping the dwindling balance of *satyagrahis* in prison for the full term of their sentences. When the matter was raised in November by a motion in the Assembly the Viceroy's Executive were in favour of release, not in the expectation of any response from Congress itself, but with a view to liquidating a position which had become absurd. With the exception of the Governors of the United Provinces and Madras, who feared public disturbance and possible serious reaction on the Moslem League, the Provincial Governments welcomed the proposal, which was eventually sanctioned by His Majesty's Government. In the event the releases seem have to have left the Indian public tranquilly uninterested. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the congress President, were released at the same time, though strictly speaking they were outside the category of purely symbolic 'protestants'.

The effect on Congress was to tear away the veil of pretence which had enveloped its proceedings. So long as there were still some thousands of 'martyrs' in prison it was always possible to make out that something was happening or might happen. Once these were released, and no one could be found willing to take their places, it was difficult for anyone but Mr. Gandhi himself to discover that Congress still had any policy. On top of this came

the war with Japan with its more immediate threat to the actual security of Indian lives and property. The demand for a more realist policy on the part of many Congress leaders came to a head at the meeting of the Working Committee at the end of the year at Bardoli, and led to Mr. Gandhi's resignation of the leadership.

It is typical of Congress methods that the breach of the majority of the Working committee with Mr. Gandhi was ostensibly on the question of unconditional non-violence based on theoretical pacifism versus a non-violence based on opposition to the Government but capable of modification in the event of a direct threat to India. On this latter basis the Working Committee resolved, not indeed to offer to co-operate with the Government, but to declare that 'only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis,' that 'the whole background in India is one of hostility and distrust of the British Government, and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can subject India offer voluntary help to arrogant Imperialism,' and to announce that it was back to the position which it had adopted a year before in Bombay, when it had rescinded the so-called Poona offer, *i.e.*, back to the demand for an immediate and unqualified recognition of Indian independence under a constitution to be settled by an All-India Constituent Assembly based on universal suffrage, in other words, by Congress.

On the face of it there is no change of policy from the extreme intransigence of last year. In fact, however, there is no doubt that some of the more moderate leaders, like Mr. Rajagopalachariar, would be willing to make some partial temporary concession if they could get their way on what is for them essential, *i.e.*, on some immediate measure of constitutional advance which would ensure future Congress control of the situation. They have accordingly done all in their Power, through the Press, to create the impression that they are, in fact, ready to co-operate, and are only waiting for the Government to take some initiative to which they can respond. How little even the moderates are ready to commit themselves to any practical suggestion is shown by Mr. Rajagopalachariar's answer to a question on this point at the Wardha meeting: 'The British Government know what we want. Therefore, we need not reiterate it.'

The Moslem League, whose Working Committee met at Nagpur immediately after the Bardoli meeting, was equally careful to avoid any precise declaration of its intentions. It began by 'warning the British public and Government that a departure from the solemn declaration and pledges of the 8th August, 1940, would constitute a gross breach of faith ... and would be resisted by Moslems with all force at their command, thus resulting in serious impediment to the war effort.' On the other hand, it went on to declare 'its readiness as before to shoulder the burden of defence singly or in co-operation with other parties on the basis that a real share and responsibility is given in Government at the Centre and in the Provinces within the present constitution, but without prejudice to the major issues involved in the framing of the future constitution.' This is, no doubt, on the face of it, a more reasonable attitude. But everything turns on the League's interpretation of what it means by a 'fair share' of power for itself. There is nothing in Mr. Jinnah's previous or recent utterances, public or private, to indicate that his idea of a fair share and that of Congress (or, indeed, of the Viceroy) can be reconciled.

5. The Sapru Memorial

On the 2nd January Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. Jayakar and ten other Moderate leaders cabled to the Prime Minister their suggestions for an immediate ending of the political deadlock. Admitting that 'detailed discussions of the question of the permanent

constitution may well wait until after victory is achieved,' they appeal for some immediate 'bold stroke of far-sighted statesmanship ... to enlist India's wholehearted active co-operation in intensifying the war effort.' This, they urge, should be in the nature of a declaration that 'India is no longer to be treated as a dependency to be ruled from Whitehall', and that henceforth her constitutional position and powers should be identical with those of other units of the British Commonwealth.

The 'concrete measures' by which it is suggested that this declaration is to be implemented are:

- (1) Conversion and expansion of the Central Executive Council into a truly National Government consisting entirely of non-officials of all the recognized parties and communities and in charge all portfolios subject only to responsibility to Crown.
- (2) Restoration in Provinces now ruled autocratically by Governors, with Section 93, of popular Governments broad based on the confidence of different classes and communities; failing this establishment of non-official Executive Councils responsible to the Crown as proposed for Centre.
- (3) Recognition of India's right to direct representation through men chosen by the National Government in the Imperial War Cabinet should such body be set up, and in all Allied War Councils wherever established and at the Peace Conference.
- (4) Consultation with the National Government on precisely the same footing and to the same extent as His Majesty's Government consult Dominion Governments in all matters affecting the Commonwealth as a whole and India in particular.

These are described as 'war measures whose adoption need in no way prejudice the claims or demands of different parties with regard to India's future constitution,' but also as the very minimum which could resolve the crisis. Coming from men of such high standing and undoubted patriotism, this appeal has received widespread publicity.

The essence of the proposal is the first item. What precisely is meant by responsibility to the Crown alone is not quite clear. But whether it means that the final decision on all issues is to rest on the Viceroy personally or on the majority in this new National Government, it would, in fact, mean transfer of the ultimate responsibility for the Government of India, not to a duly constituted and generally acceptable system of Indian Government, but to an irresponsible individual or to a handful of men nominated by the party leaders.

It may be said that this part of the proposal is in the nature of a rhetorical flourish and that all that is intended is that Whitehall should declare its intention of interfering as little as possible with an all-Indian all-party Executive. But here we come to the real crux of the problem. What prospect is there of any agreement between the two main parties either upon the principle of such an Executive or upon its application in respect of the allocation of places? The signatories to the appeal—of whom, incidentally, only two are Moslems—are in no sense capable of delivering the goods. Nothing, so far, in the attitude of Congress as a whole would suggest that it would accept even the principle, especially if it were clearly understood that the future constitution is definitely outside the purview of the new Government and that the pledge of 1940 holds good. The Moslem League might accept on that understanding, though probably demanding a further pledge to the effect that Pakistan is not ruled out as the ultimate solution. But it would almost certainly insist on more places than the Hindu parties would consider for a moment. That the two main parties would of themselves come together to put forward an agreed demand on the Sapru lines seems practically excluded.

Should the British Government then take the initiative and announce its intention of framing such an all-India part leader Government, either with or without participation by Congress? Success is, to say the least of it, doubtful. However doubtful, it would be well worth attempting if it were really likely to bring about general agreement and increase the intensity of India's war effort. With every desire to see some broad, generous gesture 'touching the heart' of India, and bringing its contending elements into unison with each other and with the British Government, I cannot see this resulting. Such a new Executive, if it could be got together, would certainly not be as efficient as the existing Executive from the purely administrative point of view. Depending, as its members would, on parties which are more concerned with the struggle against each other for future power than with anything else, it would be far less likely to coalesce into a harmonious working team. It might easily become so unmanageable as to break or have to be dismissed. Or, again, its members might be tempted to outbid each other in demands calculated in a moment of crisis to appeal to the least steady elements of the public, e.g., for the recall of all Indian troops within the frontiers of India. It would be different if there were any evidence of the leaders of the two main communities being genuinely willing to sink their differences in a common desire to save India. As it is there is no justification for scrapping or discrediting a predominantly Indian Executive, which is working well, in order to embark on the almost certain fruitless attempt to secure one which, if secured, would, at best, be inferior, and, at worst, a real danger.

The other recommendations of the Sapru memorial are in a different category. Items 3 and 4 are really matters of degree. While the ultimate responsibility must remain here until it can be duly transferred, there is no reason why, to an increasingly wider extent, the views of the Government of India should not be accepted without question in respect of the representation of British India on inter-Imperial or international occasions, or the consultations between the two Governments not be on the footing of free and equal discussion. As for the restoration of ministerial government in the provinces, that clearly rests with Congress itself. If it really has the slightest intention of co-operating there is the field in which its co-operation can be immediately exercised, both directly in the administration of civil defence and more generally through membership of the National Defence Council.

6. Conclusion

I agree, therefore, with the Viceroy's conclusion in his telegram No. 104-S. (W.P. [42] 43) that there is no immediate further interim constitutional advance that we can make. We have in the 1940 Declaration a long-term policy which is not only generous and far-reaching, but the only long-term policy which can achieve a settlement. We cannot go back on the pledges which it embodies: our business is to stand by it and expound it confidently and with conviction and not apologetically. We have in the present Central executive and National Defence Council as representative and as efficient an instrument for associating India with her war effort as we are likely to get, at this juncture, without aggravating her internal discords. We can and should make the most of it by the consideration and respect we give to it, not only in matters of inter-Imperial and international status, but in the attitude of His majesty's Government towards it. On that ground we can, I believe, weather the immediate storm which is sweeping down upon India.

L.S.A.



43. The AICC's Lead

The Indian Review, Madras, February 1942

Quite as expected the All-India Congress Committee at Wardha in the middle of last month, endorsed the Bardoli decision of the Congress Working Committee by a sweeping majority. It was no doubt a victory for Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and those of his way of thinking on the lines of his convocation address at Lucknow. C.R., of course, put the case with skilful eloquence and has carefully prepared the ground. With Gandhiji's blessings—whatever may be his personal predilections—and his plain advice to Congressmen to support the Resolution, the result was a foregone conclusion. The burden of the resolution, as explained by Rajaji, was that it only marked a continuation of the Congress policy hitherto pursued and that it in no way deviated from the stand the congress took in regard to the question of a political settlement immediately after the commencement of the war. But it was made plain that the Congress was prepared to accept freedom with its concomitant responsibilities—particularly in the matter of Defence even at the risk of giving up its adherence to the principle of non-violence.

Said Mr. Rajagopalachari:

'Our Co-operation or non-co-operation remains exactly as it was when we declared our attitude on the issue at the beginning of the war. But it is a fundamental principle of a non-violent struggle, that we must ever be ready for a settlement.'

Referring to the parliamentary programme, Mr. Rajagopalachari said:

'There is a legend that I am all for a parliamentary programme. You should not make the mistake that, when we talk of parliamentary programme, we are after mere office. It is a matter of expediency. Supposing the Central Government is placed in my hand, then I would take it. But if to-day the Madras Government is given to me without control of the Centre, then I would not touch it. Under the present conditions, there is no sense in coming to office in the provinces. Parliamentary programme without real power, therefore, need not be discussed at all at the present moment. It is out of the question.'

It is now for the Government to make the next move to which the country is looking with interest.'

D. REVIVING THE CONGRESS ORGANIZATION AND VOLUNTEER BODIES

44. Satyagraha Suspended in UP

The National Herald, 4 January 1942.

Mr. Mohanlal Saksena, acting president of the U.P.P.C.C. has issued the following statement:

In view of the statement of the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, that the satyagraha movement stands suspended, the district and city Congress Committees are directed to see that till further instructions from Mahatma Gandhi no Congressman should offer satyagraha.

Anand Prakash Rastogi, Chandrapal Bajpai and Duli Chand of the Kashi Vidyapith handed over the charge of the U.P.P.C.C. office to its staff and office-bearers on January 1.

It may be recalled that during the satyagraha campaign when almost all the office-bearers were arrested a number of professors and students of the Kashi Vidyapith worked in the U.P.P.C.C. office.

45. Congress Working Committee Instructions regarding Future Course of Action

AICC Papers, File No. G-26/1942, Part 1, NMML. Also in *CWMG*, Vol. 75, pp. 452-4.

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Camp Bardoli (Gujrat)

January 7, 1942.

Dear friend,

Enclosed herewith please find the set of instructions issued by the Working Committee which met here recently for the guidance of Congressmen and Congress Committees.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

Instructions Issued by the Working Committee

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitement. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organization is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress Committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities. Congress Committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organization and reviving and maintaining contacts with the people in the villages and towns. Every village should, as far as possible, receive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contacts with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee therefore call upon Congress Committees and workers to further this programme intensively, and thus exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organized in both the urban and rural areas. Such organizations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may cooperate with other organizations working for similar ends. This volunteer organization is meant for rendering service to the

people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should therefore avoid conflict with the authorities.

Prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessities of life as well as of many other things which are of every day use. Big scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has already overcome these difficulties by a wide-spread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself, and more particularly suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport. It is therefore necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked up with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life. The Committee would especially recommend to the villagers the growing of food crops at least to cover the needs of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In cases of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order, Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities. They should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

46. Resolutions Passed by the Council of the UPPCC at Allahabad on 9 January 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-I (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Resolution No. 2

1. The Council are of opinion that the present situation demands that the Congress organization in the province should be strengthened and put on a proper basis in order to enable it to serve the people in every way and enable them further to face any emergency that might arise. The Council therefore call upon all district, city, town and Mandal Committees in the province as well as Congressmen to devote to this urgent task and to cultivate and renew where necessary contacts with the people in the urban and rural areas. Satyagrahis who have come out of prison while remaining Satyagrahis should undertake this work in their respective areas. Every worker taking part in the work should send a weekly report of the places visited and what he has done there to his Committee. No one should be appointed for this work unless he or she is prepared to take the responsibility for a particular area and discharge that responsibility in a suitable manner. In the event of the person appointed being unable or unwilling to discharge that responsibility properly another person should be appointed in his place. In the grave crisis ahead of us it is particularly necessary that party rivalries within the Congress should be set aside and forgotten and the full cooperation of all earnest Congressmen secured. No appointment should be made on the basis of party affiliations. At the same time it must be remembered that responsible congress work cannot be entrusted to persons who are in disagreement with the Congress policy and programme.

In the rural areas the first step to be taken is for every single village to be visited by a worker in the area allotted to him. We must cultivate contacts the villagers explain the broad lines of Congress policy, acquaint himself with the hardships and difficulties of the villagers, and urge them on no account to give way to panic or uneasiness but to develop self-reliance ... The second step should be appointment of one person in each village or small group of villages who should be responsible for it and should maintain contacts with the fellow villagers on the one hand and with the Mandal Committee on the other. Each district committee should appoint a small sub-committee for purpose of dividing up the district in suitable areas, in consultation with mandal workers and appointing suitable workers for each area. Each mandal committee should send weekly report of the work done by each individual worker to the district committee.

In urban areas the halqas or wards in every city and town should be divided into small areas, each such area being put in charge of a suitable worker who is preferably a resident of the area. He will be responsible for that area, will maintain contacts with every household there, will carry the Congress message to them and seek their cooperation in the service of the people. He should work in coordination with the halqa or ward committee and send a report of his work every week to the city or town committee. In the event of his not being able to discharge his duties satisfactorily another worker should be appointed in his place. Every city and town committee should appoint a small sub-committee for the purpose of dividing up the town or city into suitable areas and appointing worker in each of them. Such appointments should not be based on party affiliation, which must be ignored and the cooperation of all earnest congressmen should be secured....

Every district and city congress committee should send a full report of work done every fortnight to the office of the P.C.C.

2. Both in rural and urban areas volunteers should be enrolled for service in their particular areas. These volunteers are not for Satyagraha nor it is their function to come into conflict with the authorities. Their duty will be to serve and assist the people of their locality in every way and to help them in any emergency ... They need not all be formal members of the Congress but they must in all circumstances abide by the peaceful and nonviolent policy of the Congress. Such volunteers should endeavour in every way to cultivate friendly relation with all the people and communities in their respective areas and should offer their cooperation to other organizations in common tasks provided that they adhere to their principles and methods of work. These volunteers as well as Congressmen generally should not interfere with the A.R.P. work and any instructions issued for the protection of life and prosperity and the preservation of public order in times of emergency should be obeyed unless they are contrary to the Congress directions. But the volunteers cannot accept any responsibility for A.R.P. work or accept any office in it.

It is desirable for girls and women volunteers to be enrolled wherever possible for service among women in their own localities.

Reports of the enrollment of volunteers should be sent to the district, city and town committees.

3. The council desire to draw the special attention of all Congress committees and congressmen in the province to the instructions issued by the working Committee at the Bardoli Session. In particular it is even more necessary now than previously to emphasise the need for furthering the constructive programme in all its aspects. The prolongation of war is leading to a rise in prices, to dislocation of transport and consequent scarcity of goods. The Constructive programme if carried out intensively will have steadying influence and will not

only strengthen the masses but lessen the suffering which inevitably accompany war conditions. Every effort should be made to make rural areas self sufficient in regard to food, clothing and their necessities of life. Even urban areas can help a great deal in the development of village cottage and small scale industries which will not be affected greatly by war conditions. Village industries should therefore be encouraged in every way. They should be organized where possible on a cooperative basis and then product should find a ready market.

Villagers should endeavour to grow food crops to cover the needs of the village and grain dealers should not hold up stores for profit but should release them for consumption at fair prices. The production and consumption of the Khadi should be especially encouraged.

47. Proposed Tours by the Major Leaders

The National Herald, 19 January 1942.

Wardha, January 18

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Congress and other members of the Congress Working Committee and Congress leaders are planning tours in their respective provinces to explain the implications of the resolutions passed by the A.I.C.C. and the duty of the public in the present times. It is understood the president is first expected to visit Assam.

48. Extract from Bihar Provincial Congress Committee Report, 16 March 1942

AICC Papers, File No. P-22 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the province was held on 30-1-42 and decided to appoint Shri Anugraha Narain Sinha in charge of constructive programme of the province. Provincial leaders were deputed to the 16 districts who toured there and addressed meetings explaining the congress programme.

49. Maulana Azad's Visit to Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

2. (b) Congress ...

Azad's public activities have so far been confined to addressing one public meeting which drew some 25,000 people. After denouncing the British Government for rejecting Congress demands and refusing to grant Indian independence he pointed out that India could no longer afford to ignore the war which had now reached her frontiers. Although Congress was not prepared to compromise on the question of independence for India and was not willing to co-operate with the British Government, it was nevertheless anxious to avoid any open conflict with Government at this juncture and was determined to pursue its policy of making villages self-supporting units under Congress organization. At a previous meeting of the general house of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee and of presidents and secretaries of District Congress Committees, numbering some 350 persons, Azad had explained Congress policy in greater detail and had also given expression to unjustified defeatist views. He told the meeting

that Congress was organizing volunteer corps as India was incapable of offering any resistance to invaders and Britain had no longer the strength to protect her, and emphasized that the 'back to the village' movement was the only sound policy for India to follow in the event of invasion as all facilities of transport and communication would in that eventuality cease and villages would have to become self-supporting units. If Congress could by that time set up a parallel administration it would be in a position to build up a new India in the same way as a new China was being born....

50. Newspaper Report on Maulana Azad's Speech at Lahore, 14 February 1942

The Tribune, 15 February 1942.

'We wanted to live as respectable people in our own country but the British Government did not let us do that. When the alarm bell was rung and there was an upheaval all the world over we wanted to die in defence of our country. Those who prevented us from living as respectable people would not let us die as honourable men.' Thus observed the Congress President while speaking to a gathering of about a lakh of people in Delhi Gate gardens. The meeting had been convened by the Lahore District Congress Committee ... Among the ladies were seen many women in 'burqas'....

Referring to the last speech that the Congress President made at the same place 13 months ago when he visited Lahore before being arrested he said that the 13 months were but a span in the present day history of not only our country but the whole world. Events had moved with such surprising rapidity and the man of the world to-day stood beyond recognition. Age-long walls which gave protection to the old order had collapsed and it seemed that the hands of the clock were covering months instead of minutes and years instead of hours. In these changing times the world was now taking a blood bath. The conflagration had spread and was now at their door also.

At the time of this conflagration India stands helpless and amazed. The story of India's helplessness though very long has become most vivid ever since the last 2-1/2 years. The Maulana added: 'All doors, have been closed upon us and our repeated offers that we may be able to do our duty gone unheard. These doors have been closed not by us but by the British Government. We are not in the habit of closing doors. We simply cannot. We did our utmost to keep the doors open. But the British Government would not let us do that. They hemmed in new nails.'

Sympathy with Democrats

Continuing the Maulana Sahib pointed out the Congress' offer of co-operation was sincere and they clearly stated that their sympathies were with the democracies and they were against the Axis Powers. But their difficulty was that before taking a plunge into the deep sea of blood they wanted to know if they were a free people to do that. But no answer was given. Maulana Sahib added 'How could you expect a person to follow you if you tie him down hands and feet. He could do so only if you relieve him of the chains. If you don't do it he will follow you and will say "Go to Hell"....

Continuing the Congress President referred to what he described as 'rubbish talk of Mr. Amery' and asked the people to wash their minds clean of the belief, if they had it, that the

British Government would ever undo the wrongs done by them. He availed of the opportunity to contradict what he called the 'oft-repeated lie' told by Mr. Amery that the Congress wanted to force some constitution of its own on the minorities. There could be no greater lie than that, he said.

The Congress President made a passionate appeal to the people to give effect to what he called the 'new constructive programme' of the Congress and he had no doubt that if in the act of doing their duty to their fellowmen any Congressmen had to lay down their lives they would not be found wanting. In the coming ordeal they must all stand as one man and make any kind of disorder or any mischief impossible ... He made it quite clear that their organization was not being set to come into clash with another though they were unable to agree to join or help the official organization because it was useless. But if the official agency would require their co-operation in the hour of any emergency they would be willing to give that in order to serve their fellowmen and protect their lives and property. The Congress President made it clear that in this work there would be no distinction between Congressmen and others....

51. Maulana Azad's Speeches in Patna: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

2. Political—Congress

... Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was in Patna from the 30th January to 1st February and spoke at two public meetings, one of public men and one of students. At the former he made his usual criticisms of the British Government which, in his words, would allow Indians neither to live nor to die honourably and he called for volunteers to carry out Gandhi's constructive programme. At the students' meeting, which was largely attended, he made a forceful speech in which the policy of the Farooqui group advocating unconditional support for war effort was condemned and the audience urged not to lift a finger to help Britain, but to keep their national interest in the foreground and concentrate their energies on the constructive programme.

52. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the First Half of February 1942 on Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru's Visits to Delhi

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

Political— ... both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru paid visits to Delhi during the fortnight. The visit of the former was in accordance with a pre-arranged programme; the latter came suddenly to meet Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Both addressed public meetings in Delhi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, although the meeting he addressed was arranged at short notice, attracted a far larger audience than Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, twenty to thirty thousand compared with some ten thousand ... Apart from the public speech which he made on the 8th February Maulana Abul Kalam Azad addressed several private meetings of Congress workers, and in these he is reported to have used bitter language about British policy in India and to have assured his hearers that the Congress was as determined as ever not to help Britain in her Imperialist war.

53. AICC Circular No. 1, 21 January 1942, about Strengthening the Organization and Maintaining Contact with People in Villages and Towns

AICC Papers, File No. P-1(Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Dear Friend,

Now that the Bardoli resolution has been accepted by the A.I.C.C. all controversies created in its wake must cease. Congressmen and Congress Committees must forget the remote contingency of an understanding with the authorities, in which the mover of the resolution did not himself believe. They must direct their energies to the task before the country in the present emergency when the war has approached the borders of India....

The resolution rightly points out that the Congress can help and serve the people 'only if its organization is strong and disciplined.' For then alone can Congressmen command the confidence of the people. We must, therefore, address ourselves immediately 'to the task of strengthening the organization and reviving and maintaining contact with the people in the villages and towns.' To this end it is essential that every village 'should receive the message of the Congress.' But this alone is not enough. The Congress message must be accompanied by concrete day to day activity.... In the circumstances existing today, on account of war, when prices of commodities have already risen and are rising and causing distress and no adequate steps have been so far taken by the authorities to meet the situation 'the constructive programme presents unique opportunities not only to steady the people but to serve and organize them.'... At such a time it is not big industry, the target of the war machine, but small decentralized industry carried on in the villages, that is likely to help and serve us.

To secure effective and speedy working of the constructive programme following directions may be noted and carried out as far as possible.

- (1) The P.C.C.s should get from all the districts lists of workers with their names and addresses and record of work. Such lists may also be sent to the A.I.C.C. office.
- (2) Chief provincial workers should visit various districts and call meetings of workers and explain to them the steps that have to be taken for carrying out the various items of the programme. The names of such workers as consent to participate in any item or items of the programme must be recorded and suitable work organized for them.
- (3) A provincial member-in-charge or a sub-committee for constructive work be appointed....
- (4) Training centres may be opened, if possible, in every district where workers will receive necessary training in the different departments of work undertaken. The P.C.C.s must also try to have the service of agricultural experts, who would advise village cultivators about the best food crops that can be grown and their substitutes in the present emergency.
- (5) Days may be observed throughout the province to popularize different items of the constructive programme. For instance, there may be a Khadi Day, a Hindu-Muslim Unity day, a Harijan day, a rural uplift day and the like. These days should not be merely for show. They should serve to focus people's attention on the various aspects of our nation building activity.

During these times of stress and strain, owing to the great poverty, unemployment and scarcity prevalent in the land, there are possibilities of food riots and consequent looting of grain

shops etc. We have reports of such looting and rioting from several places.¹ Advantage may also be taken by anti-social forces of the prevalent uncertainty and scarcity to create internal confusion. If the constructive programme is worked in the proper spirit the possibilities of looting and rioting will be minimized. To that extent the anti-social forces can also be kept in check. But this may not be enough. Therefore wherever possible volunteer corps may be formed. They must be principally in rural areas, for self-reliance, mutual co-operation and to face any emergency that may arise. Though a uniform and some sort of drill increase the efficiency of a volunteer corps, yet in the present circumstances, wherever there is any possibility of conflict with authorities or with rival organizations, such aids may be dispensed with. The external help derived from uniform, drill etc can be more than compensated by the patriotic zeal and enthusiasm of the organization and its members. Wherever possible the Congress volunteers should cooperate with like organizations or other parties with similar aims. It is needless to remind you that non-violence must be the basic principle of our volunteer organization.

In short 'To the villages' must be the slogan of Congressmen. Every member of a Congress executive or of an elective Committee, if not every primary Member, should make himself responsible for some one or more items of constructive programme. He must keep a careful day to day diary of his work. Such diaries must be inspected by the authorities from time to time and suggestions made and instructions issued in the light of what is recorded.

....

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

¹ There were cases of looting of grain shops and hats in Bihar and Bengal at this time.

54. Note from A.W. Ibbotson, Secretary, Civil Defence Department, to All Provincial Governments and Chief Commissioners, 14 February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 15/9/42, NAI.

Sir,

The Government of India notice that the organization of Civil Defence has been followed by proposals to revive the formation of volunteer bodies of political parties, particularly the Congress.

The Congress have intimated in the Press that their volunteer bodies should in no way interfere with or obstruct the official organization, and that it is not the intention to attempt to put them into uniform.

2. There are indications, though not very definite, from Bombay, Ahmedabad, Benares and Patna that the dealing with actual Air Raid incidents in those towns may lead to co-operation and that there is a tendency in this direction.

If such a tendency can be stimulated, much will be gained, but any attempt to set up a parallel administration has to be guarded against.

3. Circumstances will vary from province to province and from town to town according to the personalities of those concerned, and no uniform direction for all places can

be given but it is suggested that where local officers find such a convention possible they should do all that they can to dissociate Civil Defence from politics, to accept useful help where it is offered, and even to consult leaders of all parties with a view to obtaining a non-political joint effort.

But where this friendly attitude is exploited or made a pretext for the setting up of a parallel administration this will have to be resisted and local officers should be free to take any action necessary should their co-operation with political bodies be exploited in bad faith.

There is little danger of fifth column activity in connection with ordinary Civil Defence arrangements, but it is necessary that an eye should be kept on the possibility of such action and that any political bodies likely to have such action in mind should not be allowed to undertake duties which would give scope for it.

4. The issue at present of any statement demanding acceptance of exact conditions as to training or formal employment in the official service would almost certainly harden political opposition and be used in order to accuse Government of refusing to accept the co-operation of all sections of the public even in a very grave emergency.

It is, therefore, for consideration whether Government should not go to the extreme limit of safety in accepting any co-operation that is offered, though it is realized that this may possibly involve a volte-face later if that opportunity is exploited in bad faith...

55. Meeting of Congress Legislature Party in Bombay, 18 January 1942 MSA SB (I) File No. 1018-A-III.

Bombay City S.B.(I), January 19th:- A private meeting of the Congress Legislature Party of Bombay was held at the Jinnah Hall on January 18th. Mr. B.G. Kher, Leader of the Party, presided. About 40 members including

1. Vallabhbhai J. Patel,
2. The Hon'ble Mr. Mangaldas Pakwasa,
3. Mr. Bhavanji A. Khimji,
4. Dr. M.D. Gilder,
5. Mr. Nagindas T. Master,
6. Mrs. Lilavati Munshi,
7. Mr. Morarji Desai,
8. Mr. S.K. Patil,
9. Dr. Subbaroyan,
10. Mr. N.V. Gadgil,
11. Mr. R.R. Diwakar,

attended.

Mr. B.G. Kher said that out of 102 members of the Party, 75 members had taken part in the 'Satyagraha' Movement. Reviewing the political situation, he said, that the Congress stood as united and firm as ever and there was no question of any split in the Congress ranks.

Mr. Vallabhbhai J. Patel said that the present was not the time for parliamentary programme and in no Province had the Congress Party expressed a desire to go back to this programme.

A mock Parliament, he said, was not likely to be of any use and urged the members to study the instructions given by Mr. Gandhi in the 'Harijan' and devote their attention to organizing the villages.

Dr. Subbaroyan, ex-Minister of Madras said that there was no question of resumption of parliamentary activities unless Government was prepared to transfer real power to the people.

The following resolution proposed by Mr. K.S. Firodia and seconded by Mr. H.V. Pataskar was passed unanimously:

'This meeting condemns the extremely insolent and dictatorial attitude of the British Government towards the Indian demand for freedom and is of the opinion that the only conclusion that can be drawn from their present attitude is that they are unwilling to part with real power.

'This meeting endorses the resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Wardha and calls upon all members of the Party to organize the public and to prevent panic and to guard against unsocial elements taking advantage of the critical situation likely to arise in the near future.

'This meeting also urges the members to carry on vigorously the constructive programme of the Congress under the guidance and control of the various Provincial Congress Committees in their respective areas.'

56. AICC Office Secretary's Reply to Secretary, Maharashtra PCC,
Dated 24 January 1942, about Revival of Congress Committees
AICC Papers, F. No. P-13/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

Your letter of January 22. Herewith the answers to your questions.

There is or should be no question of revival of congress committees as such. They never ceased to exist but owing to special circumstances, due to Satyagraha or Government action and the imprisonment of most of the members, they cannot function. Under such circumstances emergency committees, organizers, miscalled dictators are appointed. When these special circumstances cease to exist and the members are free to function, the committees automatically function also.

Sometime before the last Satyagraha movement started the Working Committee called upon all members of elected congress committees who had not taken the Satyagraha pledge to withdraw from their places in those committees. It will be remembered that after the Ramgarh Congress, Congress Committees functioned as Satyagraha Committee and it was natural that only Satyagrahis should be members of such committees. The Working Committee however at first merely called upon non-satyagrahis to resign hoping they would fall in line. In consequence many resigned but a few did not. The question then arose as to what should be done about these few. The Congress President thereupon definitely stated that such non-satyagrahis should not be considered members of such committees. Under the peculiar circumstances then prevailing this was tantamount to their removal. Some P.C.C.s like the U.P.P.C.C. took even more definite action for their removal. Under these circumstances it must be presumed that those members of elective congress committees who do not take the Satyagraha pledge or who were not exempted from it for any reason, ceased to be members of those committees. This may be subject to any individual appeal under particular circumstances. The present committee should therefore consist of only Satyagrahis....

2. Those who pay annas eight will be members of the Congress for the current year as also the year 1940–41 when no congress members could be enrolled owing to the Satyagraha movement and the suspension of normal Congress activities....

3. In the circumstances prevailing it is not desirable for congressmen to involve themselves in local Board elections. The Working Committee, however, has left it to the P.C.C.s to decide the question according to local conditions.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- S. Ali
Office Secretary

57. The People's Volunteer Brigade (PVB) in Bombay: Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of January 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI.

It is learnt that the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee is formulating a scheme to raise a volunteer corps to be known as the 'People's Volunteer Brigade' to give help to the public in case of an emergency. These volunteers are to look primarily to the protection of the people during the air raids and to work, whenever possible, in co-operation with the A.R.P. authorities. It is reported that it is intended to raise a lac of rupees for the purpose.

The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee has taken up earnestly the work and Mr. Asoka Mehta have been elected to be its General Secretary, Medical Officer in Charge and 'G.O.C.', respectively. The Committee has also authorized the Brigade to collect funds for its activities and has sanctioned a token grant of organizing the People's Volunteer Brigade. Mr. S.K. Patil, Dr. M.D. Gilder (ex-Minster Rs.1,000.... The general body of the Brigade met on February 26th and appointed four committees, viz., Relief Committee, Evacuation committee, Finance Committee and Rescue Committee. The volunteers will be provided with arm bands and not uniforms.

Mr. S.K. Patil in a statement issued to the Press explained that the work of the People's Volunteer Brigade would neither overlap nor conflict with the work of A.R.P.

....

58. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Bhulabhai Desai about Working from below Rather Than from the Top in Self-defence Work, 28 February 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 149.

My dear Bhulabhai,

... I do not know what the Bombay P.C.C. are doing in this matter, or generally in regard to controlling the situation that is arising. I read somewhere about the formation of the People's Volunteer Brigade under Congress auspices in Bombay. What this is and what it does I do not know. We have tried to work here on different lines and indeed have not enrolled any volunteers as such or created any volunteer brigade. We thought working from the top was not good enough. We wanted to encourage people in every small locality to help themselves

in any simple self-defence organizations for each small locality, consisting of people living there and therefore most vitally interested. They can help in allaying panic, in giving a feeling of confidence and self-reliance, in helping to deal with the food situation, in giving protection if necessary and as far as possible to their neighbours, and of course in serving them when an emergency arises. We wish to avoid conflict with the Government in this as well as in the A.R.P. work and we have sought the cooperation of all the people who live in each locality regardless of their being Congressmen or not. Personally I think that this working from below will be of more help than organization from the top, though inevitably, the top has to function.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

59. Extract from Confidential Report of Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, to the Governor-General of India, 5 March 1942, about the People's Volunteer Brigade

GOI Home Political File No. 15/9/42, NAI.

The question of volunteer bodies which are springing up is coming to the fore. The biggest of them is likely to be the people's Volunteer Brigade, sponsored by Congress. They have not got very far yet. Bhulabhai Desai, however, has been consulting people, including officials, about bringing them all in under one A.R.P. organisation. As I understood that he was prepared to sink the identity of the People's Volunteer Brigade if this could be arranged, and was anxious to put the proposal to me, I asked him to come and see me. I then found that he had something very different in mind. As the price of co-operation of this kind, he wanted a Citizens' Civil Defence Committee to be formed, to which Government should hand over the whole control of Civil Defence. I told him that, much as I should value co-operation from all quarters, control must remain with Government, and I was not prepared to divest myself of responsibility. He has gone away to think it over, and possibly to produce another proposal, but I look upon it with a good deal of suspicion. Congress in Bombay realizes, I think, that it was on a bad wicket in keeping out of A.R.P. for so long, and now, under the guise of citizens' co-operation, wants to pose as the controlling body, to which everyone will look for help and guidance. While the desire to co-operate now is to be welcomed, it seems to me out of the question, both on the grounds of policy and efficiency, for Government to divest itself of control.

60. Assam Congress Scheme for Constructive Work

The National Herald, 5 February 1942.

Gauhati, Feb. 2

A scheme of constructive work estimated to cost around Rs.18,000 to implement the Bardoli resolution of the Congress was formulated for Assam at a meeting of the Assam Congress Committee, which met after an interval of about 17 months.

Under the scheme 120 workers will be trained and these trainees will enlist volunteers who will be put in charge of groups of villages.

Mr. M. Tayyebullah, president of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee has appealed to the general public irrespective of political parties to co-operate with the Congress workers

and contribute to a fund to be raised shortly. Members of the executive committee and some members of the Assam Congress will undertake a tour of the districts immediately. Training centres will be established in three places of the Assam Valley.

61. Co-operation between Congress and Muslim League in Belgaum:
Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of
February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

There are signs of co-operation between the Muslim Leaguers and Congress workers at Belgaum, where they met together on February 5th and discussed the question of setting up joint organizations in the district for mutual protection in an emergency. There is also a move on foot to recommend this co-operation to other Hindu and Muslim bodies throughout the district, and the local Muslim League has written to Mr. Jinnah acquainting him with the action taken and asking his permission to proceed further in the matter.

62. Similar Co-operation in Ahmedabad: Extract from Fortnightly
Report for Bombay for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

In my last report I had stated that the Muslim Leaguers and Congress workers in Belgaum were co-operating with each other to set up joint organizations for mutual protection in an emergency. There are now signs of similar co-operation in Ahmedabad.

63. Letter from Popatlal Bhoopatkar, President, District Congress
Committee, Karachi, to General Secretary, AICC, 9 March 1942,
Marked 'Immediate and Urgent Please', about Cooperation with the
City Muslim League

AICC Papers, F. No. P-17/1942-6, NMML.

My dear Acharya Kripalaniji,

The enclosed correspondence that has transpired between me and Mr. Gazdar, President City Muslim League will give you an idea of the result of my endeavours to bring all organizations and communities to work together and plan out measures that may be necessary for the service and protection of the people in Karachi, in view of the panic and other circumstances caused by war drawing nearer India. All other institutions e.g. Jamiat-ul-Ulema, Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj, Buyers and shippers' Chamber and Indian Merchants' Association etc. have also written to me offering their full co-operation to Congress in these times.

I placed all the correspondence before the meeting of Karachi District Congress Committee, who appreciated the move and passed the following resolution:

'The Committee considered the correspondence between Mr. Mohmed Hashim Gazdar the president of the Karachi City Muslim League and the president K.D.C.C. and whereas the Congress has already decided to welcome co-operation from all organizations in work of this nature, the committee fully appreciate the proposed move and resolves that a sub-committee

consisting of Dr. Popatlal A. Bhoopatkar, Dr. Choithram P. G. [Gidwani], Mr. Sidhwa, Moulvi Md. Sidiq, Mr. Naraindas A. Bechar, Swami Krishinanand, Sjt. Motiram A. K. (Hon. Secretary) be appointed to collaborate with the representatives of all organizations who are willing to join in this purpose.'

Accordingly I called a meeting of the representatives of all the organizations when attendance was very good and feeling of cordiality prevailed. Certain measures were discussed, on all of which except one there was unanimity of opinion. That one issue related to raising of volunteer corps. I pointed that Congress would be raising volunteer organization on the basis of non violence but that did not seem quite practical to the gathering except the Congress members. All however agreed that there should be one united volunteer corps for the city, instead of volunteer corps, on communal or sectional basis.

Thereupon a committee of five persons of whom there were three members of Karachi District Congress Committee, one of Muslim League and one of citizens, was appointed to prepare a plan of work, as well as a pledge for volunteers that may be acceptable to the Congress and other organizations. This committee has now forwarded to me their report with a request to place it before a meeting of the representatives of all organizations and proceed further in the matter.

I am forwarding that report to you for favour of your advice. The point at issue for reference has arisen on account of the suggestion made to us to modify the pledge for volunteers (including congressmen), the change suggested being to substitute the word 'Peacefu, *aman, aamaan*' for the word 'Non violent'.

The Karachi District Congress Committee has asked to refer the matter to you and solicit your advice and hence this request if you would approve the suggested change in the pledge for volunteers or congress should proceed on their own lines.

It would perhaps not be out of place to mention here that so far as I have been able to understand the mind of the sub-committee, the substitution of the word 'peaceful' suggested by them is merely verbal, so that members of other organizations should not be unduly criticized of merging themselves in the congress and accepting the creed of non-violence. No doubt Congress members joining the united volunteer corps shall carry their activities on the basis of non violence.

....

Yours sincerely,

Sd/' Popatlal B.
President,

Karachi District Congress Committee

64. Extract from Report of Sindh Provincial Congress Committee,
14 March 1942, Regarding Work in Sukkur District
AICC Papers, File No. P-22 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

.... (6) A volunteer brigade has been formed of 2 divisions, and will be whole time when called upon and the other will be only part time. Their duties will be to explain the congress programme to individuals, to allay panic, to prepare lists of unemployed and helpless people,

to prepare lists of unsocial elements and troublesome people, to ascertain whether the poor people are arranging to stock the food grains and to be on the look out whether any person or group of persons are making plans for creating mischief or breach of peace.

65. Extract from Report of Office Secretary, Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, Dated 29 June 1942, about Volunteer Corps in Gujarat
AICC Papers, P-22/1942, Part 2, NMML.

.... (1) Volunteer corps: Two methods were tried in the province for the work. In one, which was adopted for the city of Ahmedabad, the initiative and control were retained by the city Congress committee, though the membership was thrown open to all persons irrespective of their political views. In the beginning efforts were made to start the rival organizations, but none such materialized. The Muslim League, however, scrupulously kept away and they have a Muslim civil defence of their own. As far as we know, it has not made any considerable impression on the Muslim population. In the other method, which we tried at Surat, the initiative was taken by the city municipality—in which the congress has a majority—and an all-parties citizens' Committee representing the various interests in the city was formed. Here too, the Muslim League did not co-operate and set up an independent Muslim organization. The latter method has proved a little bit slower, but had an advantage of disarming all opposition from the beginning. It is our experience that whatever method we may adopt, ultimately the organization has to be manned and run by Congressmen themselves.

In the city of Ahmedabad the Government have handed over certain essential defence services like First-aid and fire-fighting to the City Municipality. Negotiations are in progress for the division of expenditure for the purpose of the civil defence between the Municipality and the Government. In the labour area, the government have handed over the A.R.P. Warden service to the Majur Mahajan....

66. Anugrah Narayan Sinha's Efforts in Bihar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of January 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI.

As regards proposals for A.R.P. and Civil Defence Work, Mr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha, who was Finance Minister in the Congress Ministry in Bihar, put forward a scheme for relief work in case of air raids to be done by mahalla committees and volunteers. Meetings with a similar object have been held in other places. Mr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha has since developed his scheme for organization of a seva-dal consisting of people who would move about in towns allaying panic and helping those in distress. The Governor's Adviser in charge of A.R.P. discussed this matter with Mr. Sinha who appears anxious to avoid any overlapping or interference with official A.R.P. measures. Mr. Sinha said that the body would cooperate with the Government A.R.P. organization, but would not work in subordination to it, but would keep its separate identity.



67. Letter from Krishna Ballabh Sahay to J.B. Kripalani and Rajendra Prasad, Hazaribagh, 21 February 1942, about Problems in Organizing Village Defence Forces
AICC Papers, File No. G-2/1942, NMML.

Dear Sir,

I would like to bring to your notice in the hope of getting guidance from you, the following difficulties which I have experienced in the matter of volunteer organization to which I have been giving my particular attention.

(1) It is easy to organize village Defence Force (Gram Raksha Samity) at places where no organization of the Muslim League or Hindu Sabha exists. But where these two organizations and specially the former are functioning it is not so easy to do so. The Musalmans generally don't like to work under the Congress Organisation. To leave them is, for all interests and purposes to create practically a Hindu organization which may come into conflict with the volunteers' force which the Muslim League has built up or will probably build up as a retort to our effort. It is however easy to create a village Defence Force working not under the congress but consisting of volunteers for all communities. But the Muslim volunteers joining such a Force not only refuse to be ordinary members of the Congress, they will not even wear Gandhi cap or chapras made of khadi.

(2) Often the volunteers we enroll suggest that for night patrol they should carry with them Garas or pharas or even guns. These are required not only for attacking the thieves and dacoits but to protect them from wild beasts which appear at night. I have been telling them that they should not carry these weapons because it may lead to their being incriminated by the Police. But supposing the British Government collapses and the Thugs and dacoits we are preparing against, actually make their appearance, are these volunteers expected to meet them with non-violence? In my opinion this is too much to expect from newly enrolled volunteers who are not even 4 anna congress members and who are not habitual khadi wearers. To confine volunteer organization to only staunch congressmen is to make the attempt of village Defence ludicrous.

I think these and other kindred points deserve thorough discussion. Any way clear instructions in these fields will be highly appreciated....

Yours sincerely,

Krishna Ballabh Sahay(?)

68. Protection Committees in Madras Presidency: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of January 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI.

The Congress is enrolling volunteers to form Protection Committees. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League are also doing the same. All these organizations profess to be very willing to work in co-operation with the Police and A.R.P. services. But obviously their main object is political propaganda.



69. Letter from the Organizer, Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee Volunteer Corps, to AICC General Secretary, 19 April 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-10/1942-6, NMML.

Sir,

As per Working Committee instructions and the AICC Circulars Nos.1 & 8 dated 21st Jan., 1942 and 24th March 42 respectively, the K.P.C.C. Volunteer Sub-Committee has undertaken the work of organizing Volunteer Corps to assist the people in protecting themselves from internal civil disorder. As per instructions these organizations have been thrown open to all the people irrespective of political affiliation and efforts are being made to organize such corps in every town and village of the province.

Recently a controversy has arisen over the point whether the volunteers enrolled by these organisations can, in case of emergency, use their right of self-defence by violence when they are incapable of defending themselves by non-violence. Some are of opinion that they are not, and some think that under such circumstances the volunteers instead of leaving their post of duty and running away like cowards, may use violence allowed by law for their self-defence. No clear instructions in this connection have been given as yet. I therefore, request you to make this point clear as early as possible so that this controversy will be set at rest.

70. Reply from Office Secretary, AICC, to Organizer, Karnataka PCC, 25 April 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-10/1942-6, NMML.

Dear friend,

We have your letter of the 19th inst. The Congress Volunteer Organisation have to abide by the policy of non-violence. It should be the earnest endeavour of our volunteers to follow this policy. No clear answer can be given to the question you have asked. The Congress Working Committee has laid down the general policy which our volunteer organizations should try to follow to the maximum extent possible.

71. Efforts in Punjab: Letter from Bhimsen Sachar of the Punjab Assembly Congress Party to Maulana Azad, 12 March 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. G-1/1942, NMML.

My dear Maulana Sahib,

A meeting of the Punjab Congress Assembly Party was held in the Committee Room of the Assembly Chamber on the 10th of March. The resolution of the All India Congress Working Committee contained in its proceedings from January 13th to 17th 1942, refusing to lift the ban against Congress members attending the Punjab Assembly was noted by it and I was directed to request you to place the point of view of the Punjab Congress Assembly Party once more before the All India Congress Working Committee.

Your recent visit to the Punjab gave you clear idea of the extent and the depth of the feelings of the Party on this question. The Party reiterates its opinion, that, in the absence of a general boycott of the legislatures, absence of the members of the Congress Party from the Punjab Assembly is detrimental to the Congress cause in the province. By this absence even after the suspension of the Satyagraha the party has already gone down considerably in the estimation of a large body of its constituents. What the constituents cannot understand—and which we equally fail to comprehend—is the anomalous position of the Congress. If no useful purpose can be served by the Party participating in the Assembly proceedings why should not the Congress members make room for those who believe that a useful purpose can certainly be served by functioning inside the Assembly. They believe that in the present critical times in any case, certain things ‘need’ to be said publically [sic] and forcibly ‘and that the Chamber is the best place, where they could be said effectively.’ The holders of the view suffer from no delusion. They know they cannot today easily defeat the Government but they claim that the pressure of public opinion systematically brought to bear on the Assembly would ultimately compel the Government to modify somewhat the ‘emphasis of the policy if not the policy itself’.... The feeling is not why we are attending the Assembly but why we are not being permitted to attend it all the time. The Opposition is a Party outside the Assembly Chamber as well as inside ... This in the peculiar situation of the Punjab where a practical reign of terror has been and is being resorted to and where so many of our Party members of the Assembly are detained without trial and charge, becomes imperative in order to protect the civil liberties of the people and to create an atmosphere which will very soon bring the present most reactionary regime to its knees. There is in the present situation, apart from other reasons, an imperative necessity for us to be at our posts.

The general body of our electorates is of the view—and this view is fully shared by the Party—that the present policy of the Congress has the direct effect of consolidating the position of the present government in the Punjab.

It is the considered opinion of the Party that our main object should be to create an atmosphere in which it would be feasible to change the present reactionary government. You are fully aware of the doings of this government and there cannot be two opinions on the desirability of working to an early change in it, and this change cannot possibly be brought about unless the Congress party is restored to its normal activities ... You were good enough to fall in with my view which I had placed before you on the 17th February that the Congress Party’s strength should be made available for creating and maintaining in office a new non-Congress Party inside the Assembly, as in the case of Sind. To do this we must be in the closest possible touch with the non-congress members of the Assembly. Assembly sessions provide excellent opportunities for such contacts...

The Party will feel grateful to you if you would be kind enough to impress the urgency of our point of view on your colleagues of the All India Congress Working Committee.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Bhimsen Sachar



72. Initiatives in Delhi: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of January 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/42, NAI.

Political speeches are becoming more acid, and the celebrations of Independence Day evoked more interest than for several years past. The Congress appears to be toying with the idea of a parallel civil defence organization of their own or at least making their cooperation in civil defence subject to conditions which would give the various A.R.P. services a 'nationalist' quality. In an informal meeting of members of the Delhi Municipal Committee on the 29th January Mr. Asaf Ali, M.L.A. attacked the authorities for the incomplete state of A.R.P. in Delhi and other towns in India, hinting broadly that this was due to the indifference of Englishmen to the value of Indian life, and urged that the municipality should take the matter in its own hands. The Congress element in the Delhi Municipal Committee is not strong, and that body is not likely to be won over to such views, but the manoeuvres of Congressmen in this direction will require watching....

Following the trend of Congress policy, mentioned above, appeals were made at two flag salutations organized by the Majlis-i-Ahrar for the formation of an Ahrar volunteer corps for A.R.P. work.

73. Translation of a Shorthand Report of a Speech Delivered by Mohan Lal Saksena, MLA, at a Meeting in Sant Nagar, Karol Bagh, Delhi City, on 31 March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 73/42, NAI.

This meeting has been convened to acquaint you with the Congress programme for defence. I cannot say anything about Sir Stafford Cripps. The hollowness of British Imperialism has been demonstrated to the world. Every country which came forward at the instigation of British Imperialism has been finished. The Government was under the impression that Japan would be crushed. We were also of the view that the Government was keeping her power in reserve for the protection of her territories but in no time Japan took possession of Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Singapore, the Andamans and Rangoon. We do not know what awaits us.... What the British have done for us during the past 150 years, scarcely needs mention. Every one of us even a poor tongawala knows it well. Today the prestige of the British Government is at its lowest ebb. Sir Cripps has been sent to India to create a spirit of confidence. What he has brought must be known to you. The Government is anxious to retain the defence of the country in their own hands. There is a lack of mutual confidence. What progress have they shown during the last two years when China is fighting single-handed against Japan for the last four years. The English are at the root of the progress of Japan. They (the Japanese) did not possess cannons, guns or ships. At present their navy and air forces are not inferior to that of any other Power in the world.... Had the treatment meted out to the Indians been better the need for requisitioning the assistance of China for the defence of Burma would not have arisen at all.... If the entire administration of the country were entrusted to us we would be duty bound to defend our country and this will infuse courage amongst the Indians. The soldiers in the British units are getting a lot of allowances with their pay; they are fighting for money and not for freedom. The Russians are facing Germany courageously. You have to

prepare 2/3 crores of people to defend and serve the country and the nation. The Congress has no intention of harassing or waging war against the British. They are prepared to make every sacrifice for the attainment of freedom for the country. We want to remain free like other countries. We have to face all the calamities boldly and banish fear from our minds. The rich should help the poor. People are finding it difficult to buy wheat though they are prepared to pay for it. The Hindus and Muslims should make arrangements in each Mohalla for the poor. Death by starvation far exceeds that by air-raids. There is fear of loot. You should organize committees in every ward, make up mutual differences, manage your own affairs. Let us unite and help each other as volunteers.

E. INDEPENDENCE DAY

74. Congress Working Committee Resolution on Independence Day

Congress Bulletin, No. 1, 5 February 1942, pp. 7–9.

The Working Committee draw the attention of all Congress Committees, Congressmen and the country to the necessity of observing properly and with due solemnity the Independence Day on January 26, 1942. Since 1930 this day has been regularly observed all over the country and it has become a landmark in our struggle for independence. The celebrations on the 26th must express the declaration of our national will to freedom.

The Working Committee call upon all Congressmen and women to take the Independence Pledge given under in public meetings called for the purpose. Where owing to illness or other physical disability or owing to being an out of the way place, individual Congressmen are unable to attend a public meeting, they should take the pledge in their homes individually or in groups.

Pledge

‘We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

‘We recognize that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain Independence.

‘We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

‘We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the constructive programme of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill among fellow-men without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance in every way the

interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that distinction between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faith may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interest.

‘Charkha and Khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme, for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi, and so far as possible, products of village handicrafts only and endeavour to make others do likewise.

‘We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India.’

75. Bombay Provincial Congress Committee’s Programme for Independence Day

The Bombay Chronicle, 21 January 1942.

- 7 a.m. Hoisting of the Congress Flag on houses and business premises by the public.
- 8 a.m. Congress Flag Salutation at Congress House. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai will unfurl the flag and explain the Independence Pledge.
- 4.30 p.m. Independence Day procession from Dhobi Talao (end of Esplanade Maidan) to Chowpatty via Kalabadevi, Bhuleshwar Fire Brigade, C.P. Tank, Vithalbhai Patel Road and Sandhurst Road.
- 6 p.m. Public meeting at Chowpatty to take the Independence Pledge. Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai will preside. Besides the central meeting, there will be several public meetings at several places in the City under the auspices of the various D.C.C.s.

Non-stop sacrificial spinning will begin at the Congress House at 5 p.m. on Sunday, January 25, and will continue for 24 hours until 5 p.m. on the ‘Independence Day’.

There will be sale of Button Flags by Congress Desh Sevikas and Volunteers throughout the day along with the hawking of Khaddar.

There will be cycle processions in different Wards to announce the ‘Independence Day’ and to exhort the public to take part in the observance and make it a success.

Commercial organizations in the City have been requested to give a holiday to the employees to enable them to participate in the day’s observance.

The Independence Pledge (copy already forwarded to Government) will be taken at the meeting at Chowpatty. Those, who are unable to attend the meeting, have been requested to take the Pledge in their homes.



76. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January 1942 for Bombay about Observance of Independence Day in Bombay City

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

'Independence Day'—The observance of this day in Bombay City commenced with the usual flag salutation ceremonies. A number of students absented themselves from their schools and colleges and organized small processions. The main procession in the evening to Chowpatty numbered 10,000 people. The meeting at Chowpatty, under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, was attended by about 20,000 people. Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai made a short speech in which he stressed the importance of the day, and, in regard to the international situation, said there could be no question of helping Britain to win the war until India was free. The 'pledge' was then read out in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Urdu. In the mill area none of the mills was affected. A meeting held in the evening by the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union attracted no more than 500 workers ...

77. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January 1942 for Bengal about Independence Day in Calcutta

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

No reports have been received of the celebration of 'Independence Day' in the *mufassal*. In Calcutta there were nine meetings and a number of processions and flag-hoisting ceremonies; but the meetings were thinly attended and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, was able to obtain an audience of only 1,500 for the principal meeting. At this he confined himself mainly to criticism of Britain's policy to India and a warning to his audience against expecting that their 'British rulers' would grant them freedom. The *Forward Bloc* members who took a modified pledge of their own at their meetings affirmed support for the policy of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose as opposed to Mr. Gandhi's 'compromise' and co-operation and observed a period of silent prayer for Subhas Bose; leaflets were also distributed, principally of a communist nature.

78. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January for Punjab about Independence Day Celebrations in the Towns of Punjab

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

Congress activities have been mainly directed towards making the observance of 'Independence Day' a success, but in spite of intensive preparations meetings were neither more numerous nor better-attended than in previous years. The 'Day' was celebrated in most towns in the Province, but there were few places where audiences exceeded 1,000. At all meetings great stress was laid on the Congress constructive programme and on the necessity for communal unity. There was also considerable criticism of British Imperialism and foreign exploitation, but on the whole speakers were generally restrained.



79. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January for Bihar about Celebrations of Independence Day

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

Independence Day was celebrated in Patna in the usual way by Prabhat Pheris, flag hoisting and public meetings at which the amended pledge was read out. There was a marked absence of enthusiasm and very few flags were displayed. The attendance at the meetings did not exceed 400 most of whom were students. The meeting at Gaya was rather on a large scale—about 2,000 persons being present, but generally speaking very little interest was displayed this year during Independence Day in the province....

The Patna students celebrated Independence Day by the hoisting of the Congress flag in the University grounds after a procession numbering about 200 persons. A meeting was also held at which the usual speeches were made. Members of both groups (Farooqui group and the rival group) took part in the processions, but there were protests from the Communist section at the hoisting of the Congress flag.

80. Excerpts from Report of Congress Work Done by Krishna Ballabh Sahay of Hazaribagh in the Month of January 1942, to Rajendra Prasad, 5 February 1942 (The Report Is a Day-to-Day Account of the Activities Undertaken by Him.)

AICC Papers, F. No. P-6/1942, NMML.

My dear Sir,

I am submitting below a report of the Congress work done by me in the month of January.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 2 nd January:- | Replied to certain letters on behalf of District Congress Committee. |
| 3 rd January:- | ... Left Hazaribagh for presiding at the Silao Thana Conference in Bihar Shariff Sub-Division. |
| 4 th January:- | Presided at the Silao Conference. Besides explaining the present political situation, I emphasized the necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity and explained the philosophy of Charkha which was the final and ultimate solution for World peace. Returned to Patna. |
| 5 th January:- | Met Mr. Russell, Governor's Advisor and explained to him how the labourers at Kustore were suffering from want of proper water supply which had been stopped by the Company. Left Patna for Hazaribagh. |
| 8 th January:- | Left Hazaribagh for Karmatand where Sjt Hopan Manjhi M.L.A., resides and which was the centre of aboriginal uplift work upto 1937. Met Sjt. Hopan Manjhi and other congress and aboriginal workers and explained to them the present political situation. From reports received from them it appears that the aboriginal uplift work has gone to pieces in the interval; some of the aboriginal workers themselves have taken to drinking. I have written to Sjt. A.V. Thakker as to how the work is to be revived. |

- 10th January:- Left for Congress meeting at Nagri Churchu which is an aboriginal village in mountain fastness. Explained the political situation in the meeting laying special stress upon plying of Charkha. Returned to Hazaribagh in the evening. The journey both ways covering 34 miles was performed on cycle.
- 11th to 19th January:- Left for Wardha to attend the meeting of the A.I.C.C. on the 11th and returned from there on the 19th afternoon.
- 20th January:- Discussed with Babu Ram Narayan Singh, President of the District Congress Committee about the celebration of the Independence Day.... We further decided to write to the subordinate committees to celebrate the Independence Day. Left for Giridih to make preparations for the Independence Day Celebrations....
- 23rd January:- Discussed with Babu Ram Narayan Singh and Babu Sukhlal Singh and drew up a tour programme for explaining the Wardha resolution and reviving the congress committees in the district.... It was decided that Babu Sukhlal Singh would take charge of the meeting at Pratappur, Huntergunj, Jori, Gidhaur, Kanhachatty, Itkhor, Chowparan, Simaria, Satgawan, Gawan, Deori and I should take charge of the rest. It was also decided that as my presence was not needed at Giridih for Independence Day celebrations I should go to Domchanch....
- 26th January:- Cycled a distance of 12 miles from Jhumri Telaiya to Domchanch to attend the celebration. After hoisting the national flag I collected together the congress workers and helped them to elect a provisional Thana congress committee which they did. I then drew up a list of workers noting against each the number of days in February that they would give to visiting the villages of the Thana for organizing village committees and enrolling volunteers and congress members. The list shows that they would each give four days in Feb, visit 120 villages and enroll 1300 members. In the afternoon I enrolled 50 congress members, settled a plot of land for congress office which the proprietor promised to make a gift of to Dr. Rajendra Prasad and read out the Independence Day pledge in a gathering of 2000 persons.
- 27th January:- Returned to Hazaribagh. Attended the meeting of the District Harijan Sevak Sangh in the evening. It seems to me that the Sangh is practically a dead body. I do not know how to revive it. The difficulty arises from the fact that some of the important workers, one of whom could have taken charge of the Sangh are still in Jail in connection with Satyagrah movement.
- 28th January:- Left for Giridih as invited by Mr. Prakriti Bhushan Gupta, President, Sub Divisional Congress Committee, Giridih.
- 29th January:- In the forenoon I collected a sum of Rs 205/- so that the President may appoint a whole time congress worker for Giridih and have a house on rent for congress office. In the afternoon I met the congress workers of the town and drew up a list showing the number of congress members that they would enroll. They together promised to enroll 480 congress

members in the town. I then negotiated a plot of land for erecting a congress house at Giridih. I hope the negotiation will succeed. In the evening I attended a meeting of important congress men and non congressmen and discussed with them the problem of civil defence. A sub-Committee with Babu Bhagwati Prasad, Ex-Chairman, Giridih Municipality was formed to organize Warden and volunteers for each ward of the Municipality. Left for Patna to attend meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee and of Congress workers which was to be addressed by Moulana Abul Kalam Azad....

81. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January 1942 for North-West Frontier Province about Independence Day Celebrations in Peshawar

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

At Peshawar, an 'Independence Day' meeting was attended by some 2,000 people, at which the chief speakers were Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib. Both speeches were reported to have contained objectionable passages, but Dr. Khan Sahib has denied that he used some of the words attributed to him. Abdul Ghaffar Khan strongly condemned the Air Raid Precaution schemes in the Province upon which, he said, vast sums had been spent. He referred to the breakdown of the Government machinery at Rangoon when the air raids started there, and prophesied that his own Redshirt organization would be the only agency which would not show panic in a similar emergency in this Province.

82. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January 1942 for Sind about Independence Day Celebrations in Karachi

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

'Independence Day' was celebrated in Karachi on the 26th January with considerable enthusiasm in the Congress circles. The celebrations began with a largely attended morning procession terminating at Congress House where Dr. Popatlal A. Bhopatkar, M.L.A., President of the Karachi District Congress Committee, unfurled the Congress flag. The Forward Bloc had a separate flag hoisting ceremony in the Khalikdina Hall in the evening and the celebrations were rounded off by a public meeting at the Idgah Maidan where the Independence pledge was read and speeches made by prominent Congress workers explaining the Wardha decision and emphasizing the demand of the Congress to secure Indian independence.

83. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January 1942 for Delhi about Speeches on Independence Day

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

Political speeches are becoming more acid and the celebrations of Independence Day evoked more interest than for several years past ... the sale of miniature flags brought in about Rs 3500, almost double the amount collected last year. The Forward Bloc in Delhi had their own

separate celebrations of Independence Day, adopting the first part of the Congress pledge but omitting all reference to non-violence and the so-called constructive programme. The principal speaker of the Forward Bloc celebration was the notorious Sardul Singh Caveeshar of Lahore, who denounced at once the British Government and the Congress and appealed for a million volunteers for national defence.

84. Report from General Secretary, Delhi Provincial Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, about Celebration of Independence Day

AICC Papers, F. No. P-8/1942, NMML.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the instructions issued in your circular ... Independence Day was celebrated in Delhi with dignity and solemnity worthy of the occasion. In all the City wards, New Delhi and rural Halqas of the Delhi Province the day began with the early morning Prabhat Pheris and was followed by flag salutations. Flags were sold for decorations and the whole city gave a festive appearance. All the main bazaars were decorated with Congress flags and gates were fixed on junctions of principal bazaars on the entire route of the procession. An impressive and mile-long procession was taken out at 2.30 P.M. which after parading the city terminated at the Gandhi Grounds where the huge concourse of people had assembled long before the procession reached there to join the en-masse flag hoisting and salutation. Mr. Asaf Ali unfurled the flag and addressed the gathering and got the pledge repeated. All the local organizations, institutions, commercial bodies, volunteer corps, Muslim progressive bodies—Jamait-ulema, Ahrars, and their volunteers—ladies and girls students all vied one another [*sid*] in making the Day a national festival and in demonstrating their faith in the liberation of India.

About 10,000 copies of the prescribed pledge in Urdu and Hindi were distributed.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-

General Secretary,
Provincial Congress Committee, Delhi

85. Report from the Secretary, Kerala Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, Dated 8 February 1942, about Independence Day Celebrations

AICC Papers, F. No. P-11/1942-6, NMML.

Dear friend,

The independence day was celebrated as usual with Prabhat Pheris and Flag hoisting in the morning and public meetings in the evening throughout the Province except Cannanore and seven villages near about where a 144 order was issued by the Government. The promulgation of 144 was due to an attempt at labour cum peasant rally organized by some of the leftists. In that area we distributed the pledge forms and got them signed by 300 people. In all 210 public

meetings were held at which according to the reports we received about 60,000 persons took the pledge.

This year generally all the sections of the congress co-operated with us except in some portions of North Malabar where some communist friends attempted to make speeches in favour of an all out war effort irrespective of Briton's attitude to the demands of the Indian National Congress. But from the reports I understand that all such attempts were stopped by the respective presidents who were selected by our agents in those areas.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- C.K. Govindan
Secretary

86. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the First Half of February for the United Provinces about Independence Day Celebrations

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/1942, NAI.

The celebration by the Congress of 'Independence Day' on January 26 resulted in the holding of a large number of meetings, those in Allahabad and Lucknow being large. But on the whole the audiences appear to have been smaller than last year. The largest meeting reported last year was attended by 10,000 people: the largest this year, which was addressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in Allahabad, attracted 7,000 people ... Generally speaking, speakers at 'Independence Day' meetings, dealt with the 'constructive programme' of the Congress ... Pandit Nehru also addressed a meeting in Gorakhpur, where he attracted 25,000 people, as well as a smaller meeting in a village in that district.... Reports from all districts show that the present object of the Congress is to work up an agitation in the villages under the guise of forming 'defence committees' against the breakdown in law and order and in the economic system which they represent as inevitable.... The activities of those persons, who are proved anti-war agents, coupled with the propagation of the idea that the end of the Government is at hand, cannot but have a serious effect on the war effort.

F. POST-INDEPENDENCE-DAY CONGRESS ACTIVITIES

87. Extract from Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech at DAV High School, Gorakhpur, 31 January 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 102-16.

After about a year I am speaking again here at Gorakhpur. After my release from jail I started touring the villages and I have come to Gorakhpur also. I did not plan to come here but I received a message from your district about the conditions of the tenants who cultivate sugarcane. Their problem is connected with the important question of the payment of rent and is therefore a difficult one ...

As you know I was sentenced to four-year imprisonment for touring this city of Gorakhpur and for having delivered two or three speeches in this district.... Even at that time I had the doubt whether the British Government would survive in this country for four years.... It is a matter of pity for the person who sentenced me, that in spite of his awarding me imprisonment

for four years my convictions have not yet changed.... I have come to Gorakhpur today to inform him that I am prepared to repeat the same words which I uttered at that time, that I am uttering those words even now, and would continue to utter them in future also.... Though there are many questions before us, as far as the British Government is concerned it is the duty of every individual in this country to oppose it and revolt against it ...

It is possible that like others you also may be thinking about the question of German or Japanese rule. Those who entertain this idea are perhaps deeply rooted in the notion of slavery. They are incapable of thinking that India can ever be free.

88. Excerpt from UP Governor Maurice Hallett's Note to the Viceroy,
10 February 1942, about Jawaharlal Nehru
TOP, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 147.

.... The newspaper reports show that his main theme is that the British Empire is crumbling and that the Congress must be ready to seize power as soon as their weakness makes the British unable to maintain it. It is significant that after the Wardha meetings, he went off at once to Gorakhpur, the district in which he was convicted. The Commissioner whom I have seen recently said he was indulging in attacks on Government servants, including the District Magistrate who sent him to jail and was in his view 'trailing his coat'. He, as far as I know, refrains from openly attacking war effort, but his propaganda is none the less dangerous, or I would say more dangerous, for he is stirring up anti-British feeling and anti-Government feeling. I will watch all his activities and speeches most closely, so as to have what I hope may be regarded as a convincing case when the time for action comes.

89. Instructions to Congress Committees Issued by the Council of the
UPPCC at Allahabad on 5 February 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

The Council of the U.P.P.C.C. invite the attention of Congressmen in general and Congress Committees in particular to the programme of work adopted by the A.I.C.C. at its recent meeting at Wardha. This programme has to be considered against the background of a developing situation which is every day bringing the war nearer to India's frontiers and when the economic and other consequences of the war are already being acutely felt by the people of India. As such this programme must have precedence over all other claims on the time and energies of Congressmen. Even before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. the Council had drawn up an outline of work for Congress Committees in the Provinces. The council note with satisfaction that several committees have already taken steps in this direction. They feel that it is necessary now to coordinate effort and give uniformity to the work to be done. These instructions, however, are not meant to circumscribe local initiative which must, to some extent, be guided by local circumstances.

The work which has to be taken in hand immediately may be divided into three main sections: (a) maintenance of the public peace (b) relief of economic distress and (c) service in emergency. The nature of the work and the type of organization behind it will differ somewhat as between urban and rural areas, but the differing principles and the objectives must be the same in both areas. In any event and more particularly in regard to economic matters, there

must be coordination between town and villages and an attempt to establish the equilibrium between them.

Maintenance of the Public Peace

Irrespective of any measures that the Government may adopt for the purpose, the Congress must shoulder the responsibility for maintaining the public peace and of doing its utmost in this behalf both in urban and rural areas. A chain of men or women in charge of this work in their respective areas, and responsible to the Congress organization but not necessarily congressmen, should be built up from the village and the part of the mohalla right up to the district. It may not be possible to get suitable persons at the start in every village, and every mohalla. A beginning should at once be made with larger areas and those in charge of these units should be asked to make the necessary appointments for the smaller units under their jurisdiction. The duties of such persons will consist mainly of establishing and maintaining contact with the people in their locality, seeking their cooperation in the protection of that area and the maintenance of peace, the collection of necessary statistics from that area, and the propagation of such instructions or information as may be received from the district headquarters.

Relief of Economic Distress

Scarcity of food and other articles of daily use, high prices, growth of unemployment, and difficulties in transport are already causing economic distress among large numbers of people, and this distress is likely to increase in the near future and become a formidable problem. This work is thus a very important part of our programme. It has so far been entirely neglected by the Government. The problem can only be tackled with a measure of success by the wide spread growth of cottage and small-scale industries and by aiming, as far as possible, at self-sufficiency in each area in regard to food and clothing and other necessities. In particular a village or group of villages, should grow at least enough of food grains and produce enough of khadi for its own purposes.

The problem of scarcity of food grains, especially in cities, should be tackled, in so far as possible, immediately in cooperation with the grain dealers and others like merchants and propaganda must be carried on against hoarding and profiteering, so as to ensure the supply of grain to the public at reasonable rates.

Congressmen should invite the cooperation of all sections notably the propertied classes, in the organization of relief and an attempt should be made to provide suitable alternative occupation to those thrown out of work. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving have a primary importance in this connection. Besides giving economic relief to large numbers, they will help to ease the situation caused by the scarcity and rising price of cloth. Attempts should also be made to introduce new cottage industries and handicrafts and to produce substitutes for such manufactured goods as the market cannot easily supply now. This is essentially a field where local initiative has the fullest scope.

Emergency Services

The province has very little to fear from air raids and in any event, the possible danger is confined to a few urban localities. In the event of an emergency arising, some simple rules and methods understood by the people will be of far greater value than elaborate and expensive arrangements on paper which can seldom be translated into practice and create panic where

no panic is at all necessary or desirable. The U.P.P.C.C. will issue at an early date a pamphlet giving simple directions in regard to air-raid precautions. Congress workers and organizers, and more especially those in charge of mohallas, should render all possible service in case of emergency and in the cities where this can be arranged should receive training in first aid, nursing, fire-fighting etc. Such training is useful in itself and adds considerably to the efficiency of the worker. These workers, it should be noted, need not necessarily be congressmen but they should work under the Congress discipline. Congressmen will avoid conflict with the authorities.

In all these activities envisaged for Congressmen, they can only render effective service to the people with the full cooperation of the people. They will therefore seek this cooperation irrespective of religion, class or political opinion, and should also be prepared to cooperate in these tasks with other organizations working in this behalf....

90. Undated Note regarding the Work of the Gujarat PCC

AICC Papers, F. No. P-9/1942, NMML.

According to the report of work received in the A.I.C.C. Office from the Gujarat P.C.C. the volunteer organization is making rapid headway in the province of Gujarat. The volunteer organization in Ahmedabad excluding the labour area has a membership of 1500 persons. They receive training in first aid, signaling and messenger service, night watch and patrol, fire-fighting and A.R.P. Besides the regular lokseva (volunteers) nearly 10,000 take part in patrolling and night watch in various localities of the city. There is a good volunteer corps in other towns and districts of the province. The work of night watch and patrolling is carried on in many villages also.

The propaganda of Congress workers in villages about self-sufficiency in food is leading to fruitful results. In some places experiments to take an extra harvest with well irrigation have been tried. Arrangements have been made to keep the districts supplied with sufficient stocks of the necessities of life. Scores of cheap grain shops have been opened in rural and urban areas. The Ahmedabad Municipality has decided to stock grain worth nearly a lakh of rupees. To save the city from scarcity of water in an emergency, hundreds of closed wells have been opened and cleared. 50 new wells have been sunk in the rural areas with the help of the Cooperative Association.

Efforts are also being made to relieve unemployment. New Charkha centres are being opened in all districts. A centre for making paper has been started in Surat.

91. News Sheet No. 1 from 'Congress House', Dharwar, 23 February 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-10/1942-6, NMML.

Karnatak Letter

Last week on 16-2-1942 the Executive of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee met in Dharwar under the Presidentship of Shrimati Krishnabai Panjekar. Important Congress workers in the Province were invited. The Committee had its deliberations from 3 P.M. to 3 A.M. next day and took decisions on important subjects....

The Council has appointed several sub-Committees in order to efficiently carry the work in the Province. The Sub-Committees are as follows:

1. Propaganda and Collection,
2. Reorganising the Congress Committees in the Province as per A.I.C.C. Circular No. 3,
3. Khadi and Village industries,
4. Uplift of Women,
5. Kisan, Labour and Student,
6. Harijan,
7. Communal unity, and
8. Volunteer Board

Another Sub-committee was appointed to control and supervise the policy, programme and working of the Congress Parties in Local Bodies and if necessary to dissolve such Parties and also to permit fresh elections on Congress ticket wherever necessary.

The Committee in another resolution condemned the repressive policy of the Mysore Government in arresting prominent Mysore Congress Leaders under Defence of India Rules and further the resolution inter alia opined that under the present circumstances the only way to maintain friendly relations between the State Government and the subjects was by acceding to the demands of the Mysore State Congress....

92. Letter from C.K. Govindan Nair, Secretary and Treasurer, Kerala Congress Committee, Chalapuram, to Congress Inspector, Nandkeolyar, 8 February 1942, about Difficulties in Reviving Congress Committees
AICC Papers, F. No. 10/1942, NMML.

My dear Nandkeolyar Babu,

.... I have been discussing your letter and the question of revival of the old Taluk and Village committees and the election of the P.C.C. I have already pointed out some of the difficulties with regard to the revival of these congress committees¹.... Now it may not be unknown to you that our left wingers here are all communists and their programme at present seems to be to offer unconditional support to Briton [*sic*]. Apart from what I have pointed out in my report about the Independence day celebration I have received information of meetings in villages purported to be meetings convened by 4 anna congressmen in which our communist friends have passed resolutions in the name of the congress, offering unconditional support for war efforts. The revival of most of the committees in North Malabar and Ponnani would automatically result in their continuing a similar attitude and openly crying down the war policy of the congress through these official congress bodies. The old story of supersession will have to be repeated. We have to avoid such a contingency either by resorting to nomination or conducting fresh election....

¹ Refer his other letter, also dated 8 February 1942, reporting about the Independence Day celebrations.



93. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the North-West Frontier Province for the Second Half of February 1942 about Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Tour of the Villages
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

2. Political—Abdul Ghaffar Khan has toured a number of villages in the Charsadda area, apparently with a view to enlist more 'Khudai Khidmatgars'. In the Bannu District two Congress meetings were held on the 8th and 11th February, attended by 100 persons each. Some attempt is being made in this District to put into effect Abdul Ghaffar Khan's 'constructive programme' and the District is being divided into eight Wards, for each of which it is said that a 'Warden' will be appointed.

94. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of February 1942 about Congress Meetings in the Urban Area
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The local Congress has now entered on a campaign to secure support for its new programme. During the fortnight six meetings were staged in the urban area, with audiences ranging from two hundred to eight hundred. The leading speaker at these meetings has been Mr. Asaf Ali, M.L.A. Much of his practical advice to the public as to what to do in an air raid has been sound, but it is clear that his interest is less in the subject itself than in the opportunities afforded by it to make capital out of the alleged neglect of India's defences by the Government and to improve the standing of the Congress by getting the masses to look to it for help rather than to the authorities.

95. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of March 1942 about Punjab Congress Affairs
GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

Congress plans for the enrolment of a volunteer corps have as yet made little progress, and it is doubtful if the scheme commends itself to any but the most ardent of the rank and file. Meanwhile, it is generally believed that Dr. Gopi Chand played a prominent part in bringing the traders' agitation to a premature end, and Congress stock amongst the beoparis has consequently considerably declined, so much so that attempts to persuade them to contribute to Congress funds (which continue to be in a state verging on bankruptcy) have met with an extremely cold response. Congress influence is thus at a particularly low ebb, and internal dissensions are as rife as ever. Recently, former members of Dr. Satyapal's party have again complained to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that Mian Iftikharud-Din is unfitted to be President of the Punjab Congress, quoting in their support evidence that no attempt is being made to proceed with the annual enlistment of Congress members and that the Mian is responsible for the founding of the Friends of the Soviet Union, an organization which advocates support of the Russian war effort. At the same time Bhim Sen Sachar, leader of the Punjab Congress Assembly Party, has complained to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that Congress work and prestige have suffered a considerable decline due to the ban imposed on parliamentary activities, which in turn exposes Congress M.L.A.s to requests that if they themselves are not prepared to protect the interests of their constituents, they should make way for others who are. Finally, it is suggested that

Assembly attendance would facilitate the creation of a coalition party on the lines of that set up in Sind.

96. Extract from Fortnightly Report for North-West Frontier Province for the Second Half of March 1942 about More Congress Meetings

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

2. Political—Congress has again been active. Abdul Ghaffar Khan addressed seven meetings in the Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan Districts, and 28 other meetings have been held under Congress auspices in various parts of the Province. None of these meetings attracted large audiences, but the main theme of all was, as usual, to question the capacity of the Indian Army to resist the Japanese on the Burma front, and a few speeches actually described the Japanese as enemies of the British only. It is reported that one result of this propaganda has been to extend the depression to some rural areas hitherto unaffected.

97. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of March 1942 about Increased Congress Activity

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

Political—Congress activity in Delhi has been stronger than for many months past, with no fewer than nineteen meetings in the urban area.... The largest of the meetings, that in the Queen's Garden on the 30th March, was staged ostensibly to commemorate the deaths of those who lost their lives as a result of police firing in Delhi on the 30th March 1919, and to mourn Subhas Chandra Bose.

G. NON-PARTY LEADERS CONFERENCE

98. Telegram from Governor-General to Secretary of State, 23 February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 220/42, NAI.

32-D/42 Non-Party Conference met at New Delhi on February 21st, Sapru presiding. Sapru being indisposed, his printed address written on February 14th was read by Jayakar, and Sapru then made extempore speech on subsequent developments. Following is summary of press account of Sapru's address. Begins.

2. Since first meeting of Conference in Bombay, we have concentrated on pressing for changes in interim administration to enable country to support war effort fully. I again repudiate insinuation that we are agents of Congress and/or Mahasabha. As collection of individuals entitled to hold and express opinion on present and future situation in India we deem it our duty to say what we consider best calculated to save country from disasters which will be inevitable consequent of prolonged and deplorable disunity which is threatening integrity and present safety of country and fruition of its future aspirations. As regards Central Government our demand has been for its responsibility to Crown and not Legislature because normal constitutional ideas must be adjusted in war-time and we do not seek to concentrate all political power in hands of any particular community or set of politicians. Meanwhile without

being legally responsible to Legislature, national government can in actual practice hold itself morally responsible to country at large. Eight Indian members of Executive Council therefore deserved every support. We know that limited release of political prisoners was due to them. I wish their effort had succeeded in larger measure and more grateful manner. But truly national government cannot be formed till portfolios withheld from Indians are transferred to Indian hands. I cannot believe that out of four hundred million people not one man can be found to administer country's finances; nor that Indian defence member could have committed graver mistakes than those admittedly committed by men in power. Under present system you may collect money and enlist men in Army, but you do not touch pride of country or evoke enthusiasm for common service or sense of concern for safety and freedom of country.

3. What is wanted at present moment is act of courage and faith on part of both countries. We undoubtedly feel that old policy of English distrust of Indians survives and that mere pledges however frequent will not carry us far when hedged in by so many preliminary and indefinite conditions. England must decide its future relations with this country and express decision in unambiguous language. Until declaration that India will occupy position of honourable equality with England and Dominions is forthcoming, our mental outlook will not change nor shall we be in mood to settle our undeniable mutual differences. British statement that they are ready to hand over power but do not know to whom is curious; some of us are dismissed as amiable, well-meaning persons without following, others because they have too numerous intransigent and quarrelsome following.

4. I sincerely hope Duke of Devonshire's recent speech does not represent settled convictions of Whitehall. Such speeches do not help solution of our internal difficulties but tend to inflame party or communal tension and shake our faith in good intentions of Whitehall. In forty-five years of experience I have never seen average Indian more critical of Government than at present....

99. 'Muslim India Will Revolt': Muslim League Threat If Non-party Conference Proposals Accepted

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23 February 1942.

New Delhi, Feb. 22

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League has passed the following resolution:-

'The Working Committee have carefully considered the proposals formulated by the so-called Non-Party Conference presided over by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and are definitely of the opinion that if the British Government are misled into accepting them, Muslim India will without doubt, revolt against any such decision. For these proposals clearly mean the virtual transfer of all power and authority to the Central Government to be set up as indicated in these proposals on the basis of India being a single national unit and enjoying Dominion Status in action, thereby establishing Congress or Hindu Raj for all practical purposes. Muslim India will never accept such a position which is sought to be secured by Hindu leaders, who are virtually hand in glove with the Congress and other allied Hindu organizations in the country, under the guise of interim changes during the period of the war but in reality the object behind is to coerce the British Government at this critical moment to surrender and compel them to prejudice and torpedo the Pakistan demand of Muslim India. This will be a clear breach of pledges given by His Majesty's Government and recently reaffirmed by the Secretary of State for India Mr. Amery in his speech at Leeds on Feb. 4 in the following words, "We shall stand by our pledges both by our general pledges as to India's future freedom, and also by our pledge to the different main elements in India's national life that they shall not be coerced under a system of Government which they are not prepared to accept."

Attack Against Mr. Amery

‘The Working Committee deplore the method adopted by the Non-Party Conference and its President Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru in leveling an attack against Mr. Amery, who, as spokesman of His Majesty’s Government, has refused to resile from the solemn pledges given to Mussalmans. The Working Committee trust that the British Government in spite of the present difficult war situation will not submit to coercive methods adopted by Hindu India and will remain true to their pledges.’...

100. B. Shiva Rao’s Letter to T.B. Sapru, 27 February 1942, with Suggestions for a Settlement between Congress and Muslim League

Correspondence with T.B. Sapru, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML.

.... There was a London cable in the ‘Tribune’ yesterday to the effect that your reference to the India Office as a discredited institution and your description of Amery as the worst Secretary of State since 1858 had created a stir in the placid atmosphere of Whitehall. The debate in the Commons is only a prelude to a comprehensive statement on India which is expected next week. I do not know how far it will go. I had two fairly long conversations with the Governor of Madras this week, when he was here. He said to me that so long as Mr. Jinnah would not come to terms with the Congress it was impossible to think of any large change. He had doubts too about the wisdom of having an Indian Defence Member; but when I explained to him your views on the matter and particularly that the authority and functions of the Commander-in-Chief would remain intact, he seemed to modify his attitude. He quite frankly told me, however, that in matters of high policy it would be the Secretary of State and the Viceroy who would take the final decision.

At Mr. Khaliq-uz-Zaman’s request I drew up a note making certain suggestions for a settlement between the Congress and the League. I suggested that there should be 11 members of the Executive Council, five of whom would be Hindus, four Muslims, one from the Scheduled Castes and one from some other minority. That would meet the Hindu demand that the number of Hindus and Muslims should never be equal. On the other hand, I suggested that there should be an inner War Cabinet of five, two Hindus, two Muslims and one other minority. This is really a compromise between the two views, apart from the need for a smaller body than the full Executive Council to dispose of very urgent matters.

101. Reply of T.B. Sapru to B. Shiva Rao, 7/8 March 1942, Dismissing the Latter’s Suggestions

Rima Hooja (ed.), *Crusader for Self-Rule: Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Indian National Movement*, p. 364.

My dear Shiva Rao,

... The newspapers have been full of news about the meetings of the Cabinet in England in regard to India. It seems to me now definite that some statement is going to be made within the next few days. As regards Jinnah the less said the better. I can quite understand his demanding that

Muslim interest should be protected but it is a miserable attitude to take that nothing should be done for the country generally unless the demand of Pakistan is fulfilled.

I have noted what you say about the conversation with the Governor of Madras. I believe it is not only his feeling but the feeling of nearly every Governor and I should think also of even higher persons that nothing should be done without the consent and willing cooperation of the Muslims. They are making use of Jinnah, but what have the Mohamedans got so far? Nothing! Let us, therefore, wait and see. I am sorry that you gave Khaliq-uz-Zaman a note containing certain suggestions for a settlement between the Congress and the League. Much of the mischief is due to the evil genius of Khaliq-uz-Zaman. I do not attach any importance to these expressions of willingness to come to a settlement on the part of men like Khaliq-uz-Zaman and others....

Yours affectionately,
(sd/. Tej Bahadur Sapru)

H. ORISSA AFFAIRS

102. Letter from Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, Cuttack, to Rajendra Prasad, 29 January 1942, about the Arrest of Important Congress Workers

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, pp. 121-2.

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Since we returned from Wardha, there has been a serious turn in the political situation in Orissa. The important Congress workers are being arrested under the Defence of India Rules and it is believed none will be allowed to remain free in a few weeks. In the meantime four prominent Congress workers of Puri district, including the President of the District Congress Committee, have been arrested and three most important workers of the Cuttack district, including the Presidents of the District Congress Committee and the Provincial Congress Committee, have been arrested. Out of these arrested persons two are Congress M.L.A.s of whom one is the Secretary of the Congress Assembly Party. It is believed that the cases of about a dozen more are being scrutinized and awaiting orders for arrest....

It is difficult to guess the motives behind these arrests. But the fact that the Assembly meets on the 12th February and the Ministry is expecting a vote of no-confidence motion, lends weight to the view that the arrests of important Congress workers, especially of the M.L.A.s, are due to preventing the no-confidence motion from being passed. The meetings in which the so-called objectionable speeches were delivered were organized to condemn the way in which the Ministry has been formed in Orissa. So it will not be wrong if it is said that the arrests are the work of the Ministers who want to hold on anyhow at any cost with the help of the British bayonet.

There is also another guess in this connection and it is being freely talked about. The seceders from Congress who have joined the formation of Ministry all belong to the Forward Bloc and as a matter of fact some of these, including an M.L.A., attended the meeting of the Forward Bloc which was held along with the A.I.C.C. at Wardha this time. These people are

talking about that [*sic*] Congress is the only obstacle in the way of some negotiation with the Axis powers which are sure to overwhelm India in near future and it is for that reason it has been decided by the Forward Bloc as they say that wherever the Forward Bloc is in some power they should utilize that for the suppression of the Congress. The present repression in Orissa is a part of that programme. It is foolish at least, if it be true at all.

But the fact that repression has been started in full swing in Orissa will considerably hamper the constructive work and weaken the organization. Also the proposed no-confidence motion against the Ministry may not be moved in view of the fact that some of the Congress M.L.A.s are sent to jail. In the circumstances, I shall be much obliged if you kindly advise us what to do. May I request you to kindly issue a public statement on the repression in Orissa and its possible repercussions on the Indian situation?

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,

Krushna Chandra Mahapatra

103. Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to Rajendra Prasad, 12 February 1942, about the Money He Has Arranged for Orissa

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, pp. 123–4.

My dear Rajen Babu,

I got your letter of the 12th instant and I am glad you are better now....

It is difficult to keep contact from here to Orissa. I wrote two letters to Sjt. Biswanath Das but there is no acknowledgement. I have arranged to send Rs. 2,500 to him through Sjt. G.D. Birla at Calcutta but I don't know whether he has got the amount or not. Do you hear anything from there?

Yours sincerely,

Vallabhbhai

104. Letter from Biswanath Das and Nityananad Kanungo to Rajendra Prasad, Cuttack, 16 February 1942, about the Bye-elections and Problems Faced by Congress Candidates

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, pp. 124–5.

My dear Sir,

.... Two bye-elections are pending. The dates for one have been fixed, nominations to be filed on the 21st [February] and polling to be held on the 11th of March. The Assembly will be in sessions till the end of March. The constituency¹ is a very far-flung one and has only 2,000 voters on the rolls. The sons of Raja of Kanika will contest the seat against the Congress. Our candidate is Sri Umacharan Patnaik, an advocate, who was the ex-Government Pleader, and had been to jail in the last Satyagraha campaign. The area is partially excluded and official

interference will be severe. The dates for the other by-election have not been announced yet. If we win both the seats then we will be in an absolute majority in the House....

Further developments will be communicated.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Biswanath Das

N. Kanungo

¹ Baliguda-Khondmal constituency in Ganjam district. The Congress candidate was Umacharan Patnaik, who was looking after the affairs of the Ganjam DCC.

105. M.K. Gandhi's Statement to the Press, 17 February 1942, about
Harekrushna Mahtab's Arrest

CWMG, Vol. 75, p. 327.

Owing to the preoccupations due to the untimely death of Jamnalalaji I have not been able to attend to even important matters. I have just learnt of the arrests of Shri Hare Krushna Mahtab, a staunch believer in non-violence, and other co-workers. Shri Mahtab wanted to be bailed out but the application has been rejected. I hope that the matter will be taken to the High Court. It is preposterous that bail should be refused in such cases.

I have learnt further that the Orissa Ministry has effected these arrests in order to prevent a motion of 'no-confidence' being carried at the forthcoming meeting of the Orissa Legislature. If this is true, the action is mean and vindictive. Let us hope that the members of the Orissa Assembly will have the courage and gentlemanliness to support the motion of 'no-confidence' irrespective of party bias.

106. Vallabhbhai Patel to Rajendra Prasad, 27 February 1942, about the
Problems Being Faced by Biswanath Das

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, p. 128.

My dear Rajenbabu,

.... About Orissa I saw your interview in the Hindu of the 24th today. I am afraid Biswanath Das is not equal to the task. The Opposition is too unscrupulous and resourceful for him and Mahtab's arrest has made it more difficult for him.

I have already written to Kripalani to go there at once. They want some encouragement also.

The Speaker¹ there also is unhelpful if not hostile, at least that is what Biswanath Das complains. I wrote to you about the Speaker's desire to resign but I have asked him to wait till the next meeting of the W.C. I think we should call him at that time....

Yours sincerely,

Vallabhbhai

¹ Mukunda Prasad Das.

107. Jawaharlal Nehru on the Lack of Decency in Orissa Politics,
27 February 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 491–2.

Though grave happenings are taking place in India and near India and the future is full of uncertainty and peril, what has taken place in Orissa recently fills one with surprise and disgust. There is a certain elementary decency which people observe even towards their opponents in public life and politics. But some people who apparently call themselves Ministers in Orissa today have demonstrated that they do not possess even this elementary decency. Some of them broke their pledges solemnly given. And then, afraid of being defeated in the provincial assembly, they started arresting those who might work against them in the election campaign.

Well-known leaders of the province like Shri Harekrushna Mahtab and others were thus arrested. Shri Govind Pradhan, M.L.A., was also arrested. The simplest course for these people who call themselves Ministers apparently is to arrest the entire opposition in the assembly. Then they can be assured of a majority. They have good precedence for this both in Czarist Russia and Nazi Germany. But it is time they understood that this kind of thing is not going to be tolerated in this country and anyone who indulges in it will have to pay heavily. It is beyond endurance that such tactics should be indulged in by anybody, more especially those who call themselves Indians and degrade the name of our country.

In the bye-election that is taking place Shri Uma Charan Patnaik has been set up as the Congress candidate. I send him my good wishes and I hope that the people of his constituency will vote for him and support him in every way and not allow themselves to be tyrannized over by a group of people who have already discredited themselves utterly in the eyes of all decent people.

108. Letter from Harekrushna Mahtab to Rajendra Prasad, Cuttack,
12 March 1942, about His Release

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, p. 137.

My dear Rajendra Babu,

The date for delivering my judgment was the 17th. But suddenly yesterday I was produced before the court and simply fined Rs.100 and released. The court has held that the offence committed by me was of a very technical character. There is going to be an appeal in the judge's court. Now it seems the situation here has been stabilized. The by-election is going on and all reports indicate the Congress will win in spite of heavy odds. Besides Ministerial misdeeds, the war situation is creating such problems as require very careful handling. We are doing our best and I believe we will get out successful.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,

H. Mahtab



109. Letter from Harekrushna Mahtab to Rajendra Prasad, Cuttack, 23 March 1942, about the Success of the Congress Candidate Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, p. 141.

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your letter of the 16th March 1942. This is the last time I write to you in English, for I am learning how to write in Hindi and I think I shall be able to write letters in a week or so in Hindi.

Of course now I am out, but appeal has been filed against the sentence of fine of Rs. 100. It is now pending in the Court of the Sessions Judge. You must have known that Congress has secured a very large majority of votes in the by-election in spite of repression and gross abuse of administrative machinery. The Tikaya of Kanika who stood against us was just on the point of losing his deposit money. The present Party position is: Congress—30, including the Speaker, and the other side is 29. But, of the Congress members, 2 are in jail. Because of this the Ministry carries on.

As regards the general situation in Orissa, it is very serious and this parliamentary programme pales into insignificance when I think of that. But we are trying our best to meet the situation as best as we can. I am in constant touch with Bapuji and seeking his opinion on every point. The difficulty here is dearth of workers. I am simply praying to God. He may grant energy and resourcefulness to as many of us as are in the field to be more useful at this juncture.

Hope you are now better.

Yours sincerely,

H. Mahtab

Chapter 2. Congress Political Activities during March–April 1942

1. Jawaharlal Nehru to Maulana Azad, 4 March 1942, on the Need to Have a Working Committee Meeting Soon
SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 492.

My dear Maulana,

Two or three days ago I sent you a letter. This was sent to Wardha, copy to Calcutta. I do not know if it has reached you, nor do I know where you are.

The more I think of it the more worried I am at our not having a meeting of the Working Committee for such a long time. All manner of new and complex problems are arising and we remain passive and do not give much corporate thought to them. We await something affecting us to happen. This seems a weak attitude. It is true that nothing has happened to affect our fundamental position or to make us think of varying it in any way. But quite apart from this, we should give thought to the ever-changing scene and think also of the future as it seems to unfold itself.

.... It seems to me very important that we should have full discussions with Gandhiji and our other colleagues at frequent intervals, or else there will be a tendency to interpret events in different ways and to pull in separate directions.

Yours very sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Excerpt from Bombay Provincial Congress Committee Report,
16 March 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

People's Volunteer Brigade

.... We have enrolled about 10,000 volunteers in the P.V.B. We have appealed for 50,000. Most of the provincial citizens even including some of the titled ones have joined our P.V.B. We invited League, Mahasabha and Ambedkar's Party to join us, but the League and Mahasabha have decided to have their own organisations, though nothing has been done over. P.V.B. is non-political and non-communal and we are helping it so in every thing that we do.



3. Excerpt from Report of Vidarbha Provincial Congress Committee about Constructive Work and Spinning Centres, 13 March 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

.... There are 12 Gramodyoga Centres which carry on constructive work. A Vidarbha Charkha Samiti has been formed which will work under the guidance of Secretary A.I.S.A. Maharashtra branch. The Secretary of this Samiti has toured some of the districts and collected figures of habitual Khadi wearers and spinners. In Akola and Amraoti districts there are 518 habitual wearers and 132 regular spinners.

A Provincial Khadi Shibir is going to be opened at Akola on 22nd April where 50 workers will be trained and they will in their town train other workers in their areas.

There are 4 D.C.C.s 22 Taluka C.C.s and 4 Nagar C.C.s working.

There are several spinning centres in national and privately conducted schools. Besides those there are also spinning centres conducted by individual congressmen at Akola, Jalamb, Akot etc. etc....

4. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of April 1942 about Tours by Morarji Desai and K.N. Desai
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Mr. Morarji R. Desai, ex-Revenue Minister, and Mr. K.N. Desai, President of the Surat District Congress Committee, toured the Surat District, in pursuance of the instructions of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, between March 24th and 29th and addressed 12 meetings in connection with the Peace Brigade. They mainly advised the villagers to conserve stocks of food, to organize themselves against possible outbreaks of lawlessness and to achieve communal harmony. At another meeting at Dohad (Panch Mahals) on March 31st Mr. Morarji Desai urged his audience to develop self-reliance and prepare to resist aggression....

5. Report from the General Secretary, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, Dated 4 April 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-3/1942-47, NMML.

Sir,

Progress Report for the Month of March 1942

In virtue of the circulars issued by the All India Congress Committee, all the District Congress Committees were informed in Circulars 5 and 6 of this office about the organization of Peace Brigades, enrolment of Congress members and etc. According to the reports from the District Congress committees the following progress has been made in the month of March 1942.

- (1) Peace Brigades: According to the reports received from the districts, 2,645 were enrolled as members of Peace Brigades. District organizers have been appointed in all the districts except Bellary (Andhra) and Kurnool. Taluk posts with advisory Committees have been organized in five districts. Training centres for peace brigade volunteers to impart training in first aid are reported to have been opened in 43 centres. Training

is being imparted with the aid of local doctors. East Godavary has already opened 12 such centres. In Madras a regular Peace Brigade office has been opened and is being conducted under the personal supervision of the President of the P.C.C.

- (2) To allay panic and fear public meetings have been held in a number of places in districts and were addressed by Congressmen. The number of places where such meetings were held is reported to be 210. It is reported from West Kistna that in some villages arrangements for the opening of cheap grain depots for poor people are complete.
- (3) Khadi and sliver supply depots at Taluk headquarters have already been opened at 12 places. It is reported that the amount of voluntary spinning is very much on the increase. During the coming month arrangements will be made to take an approximate census of this item of the Programme. From everywhere reports are coming about scarcity of khaddar cloth in the A.I.S.A. Depots. All the constructive centres where charkha sanghams were organized are working with good speed. The P.C.C. has appointed four regional organizers to further stimulate this work. Greater attention will be paid to this work during the coming month.
- (4) It is reported that about 70,000 Congress membership forms have been distributed in the districts and that special officers or special committees have been appointed in each district for supervising this item of the programme.
- (5) Meetings of the General Body and the Executive Committee of the Provincial Congress were held at Bezwada during the month under review.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

General Secretary

6. Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the First Half of April 1942 about Anti-war and Anti-government Speeches by Congressmen

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... The next most important activity of Congress [besides National Week celebrations] was the organizing of hartals and meetings to mourn the reported death of Subhas Bose. The objectionable anti-war and anti-Government speeches of Congressmen of little importance, mentioned in my last letter, continued, probably encouraged by the hope that they would soon be able to carry on these activities with impunity. A number of arrests were made. Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai addressing a large meeting of 10,000 people in the rural area of Gorakhpur district made a very bad speech, which is bound to spread defeatism and was presumably designed with that object.

7. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the First Half of April 1942 about Santi Sena Dals

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

2. Political. The formation of Santi Sena Dals is proceeding and Training Camps are proposed by the Congress organizers, but it is not yet clear whether the appeal is likely to produce

substantial effects. The plans for drill of a military nature by these bodies are being watched carefully.... Amidst lip service to the usual creed that nothing can serve India except complete independence and majority rule, the press has been full of reference to Assam's special claims and the desirability of separating from Bengal.

8. From Bengal PCC Report, 10 April 1942, about Refugee Relief Work

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

March 13, 1942

At a meeting of the Executive Council of the B.P.C.C. held on 5.2.42 a Bengal Civil Protection Committee was formed with Dr. B.C. Roy as chairman and 37 other leading and influential citizens belonging to other organizations as its members. This committee has organized several meetings in various localities of the cities which have been addressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The city has been divided into 32 units on the basis on municipal wards. In every ward a ward committee has also been formed. Several first aid and A.R.P. training centres have been opened in Calcutta. Besides Calcutta, out of 32 D.C.C.'s 26 have formed Civil Protection Committees.

The present problem is the evacuees from Burma, Malaya and Singapur. B.P.C.C. have rendered aid to thousands of these evacuees. In this work the congress has received ungrudging support of other organizations like the Marwari Relief Society, Bajrung Parishad, Nababidhan Samiti, etc. Even Anglo-Indians and Muslim relief associations are working in collaboration with the Congress.

To cope with this work a regular volunteer corps has been organized and several centres have been opened.

The D.C.C.'s of Chittagong and Furidpur have also organized Evacuees Relief Centres at Chittagong, Chandpur and Goalanda ghat stations....

Report of Evacuee Relief Work from 7-2-42 to 8-3-42

A small unit of 50 volunteers, all guard congressmen, was formed. 13 other organizations also came to help and all the 14 organisations are working harmoniously as one man.

The work was to receive the evacuee, feed him and dispatch him to his home. But military accommodation was not sufficient and many used to remain behind. They were accommodated in Dharmashalas and our volunteers used to feed them and keep the Dharmashala clear. The tramway company allowed evacuees to travel from Sealdah to Howrah. A camp office has been opened near Balughat Dharmashala.

Besides giving first aid, 15 had been admitted in different hospitals. Food is supplied by all the organizations but mostly by the Marwari Relief Society. We spent the major portion of our resources on milk for children and fruits for the sick.



9. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the North-West Frontier Province for the First Half of April 1942 about Congress Meetings
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

2. *Political*—The Congress has again shown more activity than any other party. 46 meetings were held by less important Congress leaders in various parts of the Province, but were not well attended on the whole. Speeches were of the usual kind, appealing for unity and Red Shirt volunteers and in some cases belittling British military achievements and prophesying an invasion of India by the Japanese. Two Red Shirt camps were held, one at Kotha in the Mardan District, and one at Karak in Kohat.

10. Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the First Half of April 1942 about Implications of Success of Congress Candidate in Bye-election
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

There has been considerable administrative difficulty arising as an aftermath of the bye-election at Balliguda in the Agency tracts of Orissa, as the backward people of these Agency tracts interpreted the success of the Congress candidate as commencing a new regime when there would be immunity from taxation. The tactful handling of the situation by the local officers has, however, resulted to a great extent in neutralizing such activities.

11. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the First Half of April 1942 about High Level of Congress Activity
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Congress activity in the urban area has continued at a high level. National Week was observed as usual from the 6th to the 13th April. The largest audience was one of five thousand at a meeting addressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Queen's Gardens on the 7th April.... Congress activity in the rural area has lessened, apparently in consequence of the prosecutions recently undertaken of two village propagandists for spreading fear and alarm.

12. Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of April 1942 about the Speeches of Krishnabai Panjekar and Congress Differences regarding the Future Course of Action
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

In the course of the speeches made by Mrs. Krishnabai Panjekar in the Ratnagiri District between April 9th and 14th, she said that the British were adept in making 'successful retreats', that the present war was the result of bad treatment given to Germany by France and England after the last war, that Britain had encouraged Poland and France to fight and had then ruined them by not giving them proper assistance, that Indian soldiers were being sent to fight without being properly trained and that Indian women were evacuating Bombay because they feared molestation by soldiers. Mrs. Panjekar was prosecuted and has been convicted in respect of these speeches and sentenced to nine months' rigorous imprisonment....

The failure of the negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps and the Congress has led to a split among the Congress leaders in this Province, some following Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, who are in favour of opposing the threatened Japanese invasion by all possible means, and others continuing to follow Mr. Gandhi's policy of complete opposition to all wars. The pro-Gandhi party has begun a very active canvassing campaign and for this purpose made full use of the 'National Week' celebrated during the first fortnight of April. It is possible that this party might be successful not only in Gujarat but also in Maharashtra. In order to win over the latter, Mr. J.B. Kripalani, General Secretary, of the All India Congress Committee, paid a visit to Poona for some days and was throughout his stay, in close touch with Mr. S.D. Deo. It is understood that Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel also met Mr. Deo in Bombay for the same purpose.

During his stay in Poona Mr. Kripalani addressed a public meeting which was attended by about 2,000 persons. In his speech he admitted that there were two parties in the Congress Working Committee. Referring to the proposals brought by Sir Stafford Cripps, he sarcastically remarked that a mountain had been in labour and had produced a plague rat. He stated that the proposals were full of communal poison and had been made by the British in order to preserve their empire. He disagreed with Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek that this was a people's war and said that the Indians had no quarrel with Germany or Japan but only with British and that Congress stood for the destruction of imperialism whether it was Japanese or British imperialism. He ridiculed the idea of guerilla warfare and advocated the constructive programme propounded by Mr. Gandhi and the formation of Peace Brigades to prevent internal disorder.

As a result of this propaganda, the Working Committee of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee held a meeting in Poona on April 18th and 19th and appointed Mr. T.R. Deogirikar to tour the different districts in order to encourage the formation of Peace Brigades and carry on general propaganda work.

13. Extracts from Maharashtra PCC Report, Dated 25 April 1942, about Nagarik Sanrakshak Dal

AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

The response of the people to this movement is enthusiastic. More than 500 places including the main cities have organized such Dals in their areas. The Subarkan D.C.C. under the leadership of Shri B.G. Kher has done wonderful work and has got this Dal started in all the important places under it. Thana district comes much in order for this activity especially its sea-coast talukas. Sholapur A'nagar and Kolaba are also doing this work satisfactorily. In important cities the Dal comprise of all parties men. The members of the Dal are doing night watch work. They are also being given training in first aid. In many places Muslims are also joining this Dal.

14. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of April 1942 about the Constitution of a New Provincial Congress Working Committee

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

A meeting of the Provincial Congress Working Committee was held at Patna on the 15th and 16th April at which resolutions were passed endorsing the All-India Congress Working Committee's

rejection of the Cripps proposals, accepting the recent resignations of all the members of the Committee and giving Dr. Rajendra Prasad full powers to form his own Committee. The composition of the latter has since been announced. It now includes the 3 Hindu ex-Ministers and has been so constituted as to reduce the Bhumihar influence prevailing during the time of the Congress Prime Minister. The first meeting of the new Committee was held on the 16th April and passed resolutions approving the constitution of the new Seva Dal and forming a sub-committee to examine the grain situation in the province. A number of meetings have been held in connection with the Congress organization of village defence forces and A.R.P. volunteers and the promotion of the self-sufficiency campaign.... In one such meeting held near Samastipur on the 19th April 1942 Babu Sri Krishna Singh urged the audience to oust the British Government by mass action as the Czarist Government had been ousted in Russia. A camp for civil defence volunteers is to be opened shortly at Bhagalpur where a constructive programme training camp has been started already. In Purnea the Congressmen have been doing useful work in supplying free food to evacuees from Assam passing through the district, an enterprise in which the local Muslim League also has been cooperating.

15. Rajendra Prasad to the Secretary, District Congress Committee,
Muzaffarpur, 17 April 1942, about His Wish to Tour the Districts of
the Province

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*,
Vol. 5, pp. 144–5.

Dear Sir,

I desire to have a short tour of the districts of the Province. I do not propose to go into interior but the idea is to collect the Congress workers at the headquarters of the district where I may meet them and have a talk about the present situation and the Congress programme. I may stay there for two days or so that there may be sufficient time for discussion. It would be desirable also to have a meeting of the grain merchants of the place so that I may have a talk with them about the grain situation. It is apprehended that there may be shortage of some foodgrains in the Province and the idea is to have a talk with the merchants as to how the situation can be met and in what way they can help in maintaining regular supplies at reasonable prices.

It would be desirable also to arrange an informal meeting if possible of the prominent citizens of the place for a discussion about the present situation. You may also have one public meeting during my stay if you consider it necessary. I hope you will kindly make the necessary arrangements....

I should like you to keep a report of the work done in the district ready for my inspection. This should specifically mention number of members and volunteers already enrolled. I would further like to make earnest endeavours to raise funds for constructive work and other Congress activities during my visit.

Yours sincerely,

Rajendra Prasad



16. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Central Provinces and Berar for the Second Half of April 1942 about 'Samrakshak Dals'

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Subsequent to the 'National Week' political activity during the fortnight was confined almost entirely to propaganda speeches for recruitment to the various 'Samrakshak dals'. In Nagpur, the members of the dal resorted to the flag salutation and procession procedure for publicity purposes and a procession took place through the city on the 19th April.

17. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the NWFP for the Second Half of April 1942 about Congress Meetings and Red Shirt Activity

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

2. Political—Congress activity has again taken the form of meetings, 32 of which were held during the fortnight. On the 23rd April 'Martyrs Day' was celebrated in Peshawar City. 1000 Red Shirts walked from the Shahi Bagh to the Kissa Khani Bazaar, where flowers were laid on the memorial to those who were killed in conflict with troops and Police on the 23rd April, 1930. The procession was followed by a meeting in the Shahi Bagh attended by about 3000 persons, at which Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib delivered their usual defeatist speeches. The numbers present in the procession, and at the meeting represented a considerable increase over last year.

18. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the Second Half of April 1942: Congress Willing to Cooperate with Government in Watch and Ward Committee and ARP

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

It is reported that the Congressmen of Puri have decided not to start volunteer organizations as Government policy was not in favour of such organizations, but have decided to devote their time to constructive work instead and await the decision of the All India Congress Committee in the matter. Some of the Congress workers however appear to be willing to co-operate with local officials in instructing the public to form Watch and Ward Committees and one prominent Congress leader of Sambalpur is said to have assured the Deputy Commissioner there that he would invariably respond to official invitation to co-operate in the matter of Watch and Ward Committee and A.R.P. measures. They state that they are unanimous in their opinion that Japanese aggression must be opposed and Japan must not be permitted to dominate the country. At a small meeting, the Congress leaders urged their audience to unite and resist the Japanese who, if victorious, would make Indians their slaves.

On the other hand, Sri Biswanath Das, ex-Premier of Orissa, presiding at a meeting, said that the British government were not fighting for the safety of Indians and quoted the Congress as saying that any help given in the war, was not help for the country but help for the British. After denouncing the British Government for not treating Indian evacuees in the same manner as they were treating their own nationals, he concluded by saying that, in spite of their being tired of British rule, Japanese aggression must be opposed.

.... The decision of the Congress party in the Madras Legislature to form a Ministry and concede Pakistan has roused vehement criticism in Congress circles but the official attitude of the Congress party in the local Assembly is not yet known.

19. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the Second Half of April 1942 regarding C. Rajagopalachari's Statement
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The failure of the Cripps mission continued to provide a topic for discussion, but interest mainly centred itself on Mr. Rajagopalachariar. His statement caused a great sensation but while some sections of opinion praised him for his realism, the general feeling of the local Congress has been against him. It was generally expected that he would receive little support at Allahabad.

20. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of April 1942 about Congress and Civil Defence Organization
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... Among the local leaders of the Congress and other advanced political parties a certain perplexity is observable as to the course which they should pursue. Some at any rate of these men appear to have realized the danger entailed in their former policy of painting lurid pictures of troubles to come, with a view to attracting support for their own programmes.

In this connection a meeting held in Delhi Town Hall on the evening of the 25th April was of interest. The local Congress workers had for some time past been toying with the idea of forming a civil defence organization of their own, parallel to the official A.R.P. services. In cooperation with other advanced political bodies they finally convened this meeting, but did not attempt to exclude from it persons of a more conservative outlook. After lengthy argument regarding the choice of a chairman a resolution was adopted for the establishment of mohalla committees, but it was made clear that these were intended to supplement, not replace the official organization.

Political—The only Congress meeting of importance during the fortnight was one in New Delhi on the 22nd April (audience—800) addressed by Mr. Satyamurti and Mr. Asaf Ali.

21. Lucknow District Congress Committee's Attempts to Set Up Panchayats, Congress Ashrams, and Volunteer Corps
The National Herald, 22 April 1942.

Lucknow, Tuesday 21 April 1942

A circular over the signatures of Mr. Mohan Lal Saksena, M.L.A., president of the District Congress Committee Lucknow, in connection with the civil defence work in the district has been sent by the D.C.C. Lucknow.

The circular deals with the organisation of panchayats, establishment of Congress ashrams and independent means of communication and the propaganda for the establishment of village industries. For this, the district is proposed to be divided into 750 centres each consisting of 5 to 15 villages with an in charge for civil defence work....

An appeal to the public and specially the students and vakils of the city to get themselves enrolled as volunteers and workers for taking up this work in the district, has also been made and they have been asked to register their names with the D.C.C.

NATIONAL WEEK

22. Acharya Kripalani's Appeal in Connection with National Week (6–13 April), Issued on 26 March 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

The National Week will be soon on us. It has been observed every year since 1919. It commences on April 6 when the nation inaugurated a non-violent mass struggle for the redress of its many and grievous wrongs and the attainment of Purna Swaraj....

The National Week has always been marked by the renewal of our general determination to achieve the goal of complete independence and self-purification through the intensive carrying on of the constructive programme. In the words of the sage at Sevagram the fulfillment of this programme is the sure key of Swaraj. Let the week therefore witness a fresh determination by all congressmen and Congress Committees to do their utmost to carry out the manyfold items of this programme. Let this week be dedicated to the double need of the hour, the need for self-protection and self-sufficiency. It is not enough today, as in the past, to organize sales of Khadi. It is more necessary that we lay emphasis on the production of Khadi through spinning carried on in each locality and in every house. Let people in their thousands determine to learn all the processes of cloth making leading up to spinning. Let a day in the week be set apart to the sacred task of Hindu Muslim unity. Let another day be consecrated to the purge of the sin of untouchability. Let every day see the intensification of the life-giving national constructive activity.

We may also not forget that the message of Swaraj through our own effort and not through outside agencies is carried to every hamlet and home in India. Let therefore every day of the week dawn with Prabhat Pheris. Let every day end with national songs, processions and mass meetings where our determination to achieve Purna Swaraj is over renewed. In this hour of temptation and trial let us rely upon ourselves and on the guiding *Diety* [sic] that rules the destinies of men and actions. Thus shall we dispel the clouds of despondency that darken the Indian horizon today. Thus shall we drive away craven fear and panic....

23. Celebration of National Week by the Sind Forward Bloc: Meeting at Karachi on 8 April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

In connection with the celebration of this week the Sind Forward Bloc, Karachi, organized its first public meeting in G.H. Khlikdino Hall, Karachi on 8.4.42 from 7.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Alim T. Gidwani presided, about 80 persons, mostly Hindus attended. Alim T. Gidwani opened the proceedings of the meeting by reading an English article of Subhas Chandra Bose from an issue of the 'Tomorrow' and translating it at the same time in Urdu. He explained the policy of the Forward Bloc and the views of Subhas Chandra Bose regarding India's struggle for

freedom and exhorted the people to avail themselves of the present international situation for freeing India....

24. Celebration of Jallianwala Bagh Day by Sind Forward Bloc, 13 April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

The local Sind Forward Bloc organized a public meeting in connection with the observance of this Day at the Idgah Maidan on the evening of 13-4-42. Alim T. Gidwani presided. About 200 persons, mostly Hindus, which subsequently dwindled to 100, attended. A Printed portrait of Subhas Chandra Bose was also displayed.

25. National Week and Constructive Programme in UP

The National Herald, 17 April 1942.

Kashipur (Kumaun)

Particular attention was paid during the National Week here to the constructive programme as outlined by the Congress, its main feature being the organization of the Kumaun Khadi Karobar Samiti Ltd, Kashipur. The aim of the Samiti, besides that of khadi production, is to find work and employment for the unemployed.... A Congress volunteer corps is being organized by Mr. Mithan Lall.

In memory of the Jallianwala martyrs of April 13, a procession paraded the main streets of the town, and a meeting was held in the evening.

Aligarh

A heavy programme was chalked out for the National Week in Aligarh. Prabhat pheris were taken out in the morning and public meetings were held in every ward emphasizing the three-fold constructive programme of the Congress, namely Hindu–Muslim unity, khaddar and the removal of untouchability. Two meetings—one for Hindu–Muslim unity in Usmanpur and the other for the removal of untouchability in Samnapara, a Harijan quarter were also arranged....

Meetings for women were also arranged in every ward. Smt. Krishna Dulari, the vice-president of the city Congress Committee addressed these meetings explaining to them the importance of women in the National work.

Civil Defence

In connection with the work for the maintenance of internal peace, the city has been divided into 225 divisions each division containing a hundred houses.

Dehra Dun

The National Week celebrations concluded here yesterday with great success. A procession was taken out in the afternoon and a public meeting was held at the municipal maidan under the presidentship of Mr. Khurshed Lal, the president of the city Congress Committee. Under instructions from the UPCC Pt. Mahabir Tyagi went to Amritsar to pay homage to the memory of those martyrs who lost their lives in the Jallianwala Bagh on behalf of the United Provinces.

Earlier Mr. Tyagi had a whirlwind tour of the Dehra Dun district when he addressed more than a dozen meetings in different villages asking people to unite and carry on the constructive programme. Panchayats and Seva Dals were formed in the villages he visited.

26. National Week in Bombay: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Congressmen were mainly busy during the fortnight with the organization of the Volunteer Brigades and with the celebration of the 'National Week'.

The 'Week' was celebrated in Bombay City from April 6th to 13th. In spite of the appeal made by the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee to make the 'Week' a success, there was not much enthusiasm over the celebrations from the 6th to the 11th April. During these six days 14 meetings were held, the attendance varying from 50 to 600. The speeches made were of the type usually made on this occasion. A majority of the speakers also appealed to the audience to join the People's Volunteer Brigade. However, on April 12th a procession of the People's Volunteer Brigade, which was the main item on the programme of the 'Week', was organized by the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, in which 12,000 volunteers, who are said to have been enrolled in the Brigade, including 300 woman volunteers, took part. Bullock carts carrying First Aid, Fire-fighting, A.R.P. and other equipment formed part of the procession. The procession ended at Chowpatty where a meeting was held under the presidentship of Mr. N.M. Joshi. It was attended by about 25,000 persons. The speakers explained the impending danger due to the war and appealed to the audience to enroll themselves in the Brigade. The meeting held on the last day of the 'Week' was addressed by Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai who explained the Congress view-point in regard to the failure of negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps.

27. National Week in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... 'National Week' was observed as usual from the 6th to the 13th of April, though the meetings held in the earlier stages of the week attracted only very slender interest. Somewhat more successful meetings were held in Lahore and Amritsar on the concluding day. The Lahore meeting, which drew an audience of 2,000 to the banks of the Ravi, was notable for a speech by Mrs. Sucheta Kriplani, wife of the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee, who pointed out that India had no quarrel with Japan and wanted liberty to decide her own fate and to conclude a peace with Japan, if necessary. The Amritsar meeting, which drew an audience of 800, was notable for an objectionable speech by Pandit Mahabir Tiagi, M.L.A. (U.P.) whose sarcastic references to British reverses evoked applause from the audience. In other districts, advantage was taken of the occasion to evoke memories of the events at Jallianwala Bagh and to criticize the British Government's proposals.



28. National Week in CP and Berar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Further reports of the 'National Week' activities have been received. Attendance at the meetings towards the end of the week increased and there was also a deterioration in the tone of the speeches. Several speakers expressed doubts regarding the ability of Government to defend India and used the occasion to appeal for volunteers for the Congress 'Sanrakshak dals' which they stated, are being organized in different towns.... Pandit R.S. Shukla (ex-Prime Minister) said at a meeting in Raipur that the best method of dealing with Japanese aggression was by non-violence. He added that he had no faith in A.R.P. which was not non-violent. Mr. Brijlal Biyani addressed a 'National Week' meeting at Akola, at which Mr. Gole (ex-Minsiter) presided. He also addressed a meeting at Buldana and said that Hitler had begged on his knees for freedom for India, but this has been refused. A largely attended meeting was also held in Nagpur during the week and was presided over by Dinadayal Gupta. He supported the Congress rejection of Sir Stafford Cripps' proposal, and said that Indians would allow rivers of blood to flow in order to save India from the Japanese.

29. Letter from Sadik Ali, Office Secretary to A.B. Lathe, Belgaum,
25 April 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-10/1942-6, NMML.

Dear friend,

We have your letter of April 20th....

The decision of the W.C. to remove congressmen who did not offer Satyagraha from elective Committees¹ is not liked by you. You say congressmen have been penalized for not doing what they had choice to do or not to do. This is not correct. The Congress laid down a programme of fight which it was expected all congressmen and especially office bearers and members of elective committees should follow. If they could not, for one reason or another, it was but reasonable to expect them to resign their posts and let them be filled by those who participated in the fight. It is only when they did not fulfil their reasonable expectation, that the Working Committee was obliged to pass the resolution at Wardha in January last making it obligatory upon them to resign from elective committees. These friends do not cease to be congressmen. They can serve the congress as such. It is not conducive to the effective functioning of the organization that congressmen should keep out of the fight when the fight is on and resume offices when the fight ceases or is called off. The resolution passed at Wardha and referred to above provides for cases where congressmen could not join the struggle for good reasons.

¹ The Congress Working Committee, at its session in Wardha from 13–17 January, passed the resolution titled 'Re-Functioning of Congress Committees':

'The President's instructions dated December 27 about the refunctioning of Congress Committees are confirmed. All elective Congress Committees will, therefore, continue to function as such and will consist of Satyagrahis as decided after the Ramgarh Congress. Those members who ceased to be members of the Committee by not signing the Satyagraha pledge or after signing it did not offer Satyagraha when called upon to do so, will not be considered members of these Committees any longer, unless they were exempted from Satyagraha or were prevented by illness or other sufficient reason from offering it. Provincial executives will consider such cases and take action in accordance with the principles laid down above.'

30. Extract from Report of Maharashtra PCC, 25 April 1942

AICC Papers, File No. P-1 (Part I)/1942, NMML.

IV. Tours of Leaders:

Shri Shankar Rao Deo—Visited Kolaba, Ratnagir, Sholapur and whole Khandesh districts. He emphasized the strengthening of the Congress organizations and explained the present programme of congress work. Also appealed for funds....

Acharya Vinobhaji—Toured for 13 days in West Khandesh, 3 days in East Khandesh and 2 days in Subarkan Dist. He emphasized self sufficiency in clothing and their yarn work.

Shri G.A. Deshpande—Visited seven places in Siri districts especially attending the executive committee meetings of these D.C.C.'s. He emphasized maintaining a living contact between the M.P.C.C. and all the subordinate committees. Also exhorted workers to be more active.

Besides these leaders, district leaders also visited their respective areas. Shri B.G. Kher in Bombay Suburban, Dr. Antrolikar in Sholapur, Shri Appasaheb Patwardhan in Ratnagiri, Shri Krishna in Thana and Shri Vedak in Kolaba.

.... V. Sevadal—A central committee has been appointed to organize it. Shri S.M. Joshi is organizer. 135 branches have opened and about 2000 volunteers including ladies have been enrolled. It is on non-communal and non-party lines. 2 camps are running for training. One at Congress house, Patna from 21.4.42 to end of May. The other at Palghat in Thana District from 14.4.42 to 28.4.42. 30 girls and 55 boys received training in this camp.

VI. National Week—National Week was celebrated in almost 500 places. Main plunks [*sic*] was organization of Protection brigades, self-sufficiency in clothes and collection of funds for Harijan work.

VII. Congress Organisation—8 out of 11 D.C.C.'s are working satisfactorily. Nearly 50 out of 135 Talukas Committees are active and responsible. Very few of the Gram Committees are active.

The working of the Working Committee resolution that only satyagrahis should be members of committees has been found not only difficult but in some cases also defective as real workers are left out and incompetent powers are sitting tight on the committees.

VIII. Meeting of the Provincial Executive was held on 18.4.42. Shri Kripalaniji also attended it for some time. The Committee's chief decisions were about the Protection Brigades and defence of the country in face of Japanese aggression.

Chapter 3. The Cripps Mission

A. THE BACKGROUND AND THE PROPOSALS

1. 'British War Cabinet Changes: Cripps to Be Leader of Commons', 20 February 1942: News Item on Sir Stafford Cripps's Inclusion in the Reconstituted British War Cabinet and Cripps's Interview on India

The National Herald, 21 February 1942.

An important reorganization of Britain's War Cabinet was announced from Downing Street last night. The new War Cabinet is reduced in numbers from nine to seven and will consist of the following: Mr. Churchill, Major Attlee, Sir Stafford Cripps, Sir John Anderson, Mr. Eden, Capt. Oliver Lyttelton and Mr. Bevin. Mr. Churchill remains First Lord of the Treasury and Minister of Defence. Sir Stafford Cripps will join the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and Leaders of the House of Commons....

Cripps and India

The Daily Mail recently published a front-page interview with Sir Stafford Cripps whom it reported as saying that he had no present intention of going to India but that it did not mean that if asked by someone he might not go.

'It would attract me very much to go to India if I felt I could do any good to settle the Indian question.... It is a question that badly needs settling. It is not a matter primarily for Indians but for the Government. When Britain has settled her political policy then I think Indians can be persuaded to agree. The tendency is to shelve responsibility on to the leaders. The first stage is that the British Government has to make up its mind on its policy—a different policy from any so far any so far announced.'

Answering questions at a meeting at Bristol, Sir Stafford Cripps said that he believed that Britain should give India a complete guarantee of independence immediately after the war....

Likely Effect on India Policy

(From Our Special Correspondent)

'The logic of events and Sir Stafford Cripps's appointment as Leader of the House of Commons will ensure a sympathetic statement on India' is the general comment in political circles here [Delhi] on the British War Cabinet changes announced last night. It is probably because Mr. Churchill wants to keep himself out of commitments which Sir Stafford Cripps might make regarding India that Sir Stafford has been taken in the War Cabinet as well as made Leader of the House, is another comment.

It seems fairly certain that at an early date a statement on the Indian situation will be made in the Commons.

2. Draft Declaration (Cripps Mission) of the Proposals for Discussion with Indian Leaders, 30 March 1942¹

LAR, Vol. 1, pp. 220–1.

His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, equal in every respect to the United Kingdom and the other Dominions of the Crown, and free to remain in or to separate itself from the equal partnership of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

His Majesty's Government therefore make the following declaration:

- (a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.
- (b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for the participation of the Indian States in the constitution-making body.
- (c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to:

- (i) the right of any Province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain for the time being its present constitutional position, provision being made for subsequent accession, if it so decides.

With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution following the lines laid down above.

- (ii) the signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body covering all necessary matters relating to the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate revised Treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the new situation.

- (d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities:

Immediately upon the result being known of the Provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral college.

Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion of the total population as the average for British India, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

- (e) While during the critical period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for India's defence, they desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task so vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

¹ There were different versions of the Draft Declaration. The original draft was circulated by the Secretary of State as early as 28 February 1942 and was slightly modified later. We have given here only the final version of the Draft as was brought by Cripps to India and published on 30 March 1942. Before making it public, Cripps had discussed it with Indian leaders and also at press conferences. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State had seen the document and had begun speculating it much earlier.

3. Lord Linlithgow's Telegram to L.S. Amery on His Meeting with Chiang Kai-shek

Linlithgow Papers (on microfilm), Vol. 22, NMML.

20 February 1942

.... Short summary of my two talks with him is as follows. Political. He told me he did not understand India and thought he was anxious to do good he did not know how to achieve it. It soon became evident that he regarded Gandhi and Nehru as only Indians politically important. I do not think he knew the names of any others. I told him about communal position and stressed importance of Muslims in army and munition making, and introduced topic of China's large Muhammadan population. He appeared to be interested and impressed. He was particularly keen to hear about Gandhi's attitude at commencement of war and showed surprise when I exploded myth about our having forced India into war without due consultation and despite alleged readiness of nationalists to rush to our aid had we only given them a chance. I gather that he had largely corrected his views about Congress before he had left Delhi. He reported to me that he had done his best to persuade Nehru to play up but had failed. He hoped for better luck with Gandhi. He stressed connection between political contentment and capacity of people to resist enemy propaganda. In these days the army alone could not produce success. It was necessary to have determined support of civil population willing to endure sacrifices. Therefore if he were the British Government he would offer India a firm promise of Dominion Status; while if an Indian, he would ask for nothing more. I explained some of our difficulties....

I was much struck by the wide sweep of his mind and his quickness in taking a point. Inevitably he is deeply preoccupied about Indo-Burmese communication with China and the urgent need for us to maintain touch with China's armies and, if this is broken, to strive to re-establish it. The Generalissimo seemed to me to be an able and determined man.



4. T.B. Sapru's Letter to Shiva Rao Saying That Chiang Kai-shek's Visit Will Not Make Any Difference; It Might Complicate the Situation

T.B. Sapru Papers (on microfilm), No. R-184/10, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

14 February 1942

... I have also followed with great interest all that has been appearing in the newspapers about Chiang Kai-Shek's visit to New Delhi ... I am becoming more and more convinced—this may displease you, but I must say—that it is impossible now to expect any rapprochement between the Government and the Congress or between the Congress and the Muslim League. Personally I do not think that the General's visit is going to have the slightest effect on the international situation in India. If anything, it may complicate the situation for us.

I note that Chiang Kai-Shek met the members of the Executive Council and talked to them for a short time but that most of the time was taken up with conversation between him and Jawaharlal. I did not attach any importance to the news that he was coming to Allahabad or going to Wardha. There seemed to me to be an element of propaganda in it. I am not at all surprised that his visit is going to be barren so far as the political situation is concerned. When each leader is prepared to say 'I am India', there can be no hope for settlement.

5. T.B. Sapru's Letter to Shiva Rao Making Speculations regarding Chiang Kai-shek's Visit

T.B. Sapru Papers, No. R-184/12, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

17 February 1942

.... I read yesterday an excellent article in the *Statesman* on 'Evolving Army'. It represents fully my views and I have written to the *Statesman* supporting it and saying that I shall be glad to adopt it as a part of my speech at Delhi. Since then I have read in the *Leader* this morning that Winston Churchill's reply to my cable has been received by the Viceroy and may be released for publication at the end of this week. The telegram says that the entire Government will be Indianised and if the Congress and the Muslim league do not make any response appointments will be made of several people in the usual way. If this is a correct forecast, to that extent it is satisfactory. It says nothing at all, however, as to a declaration as to the status of India. If I get the reply at Delhi I shall deal with it then and there.

The fall of Singapore is a terrible thing. Apart from the blow to the prestige of the British it implies a direct [threat] to India. Our Congress and Muslim League friends are still busy carrying on their controversy. There is rather a curious paragraph from the local correspondent of the *Leader* which suggests that there is something behind the cancellation of the visit of Chiang Kai-Shek to Allahabad. The correspondent asked Mr. R.S. Pandit who had gone to the railway station to see Jawaharlal Nehru on his way to Calcutta and Mr. Pandit is reported to have said that he knew all about it but his lips were sealed. Do you know anything?...



6. Letter by M. Hallett, Government of UP, to Lord Linlithgow on
Chiang Kai-shek's Visit, 21 February 1942
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 105, NMML.

There is one rumour going round, in particular in Congress circles, regarding Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek's visit which is in my view definitely dangerous. You may have heard of it from other sources, for I notice a reference is made to it in a recent report by the C.I.D. of the Central Provinces. There is of course much speculation about the Marshal's visit and this speculation has increased on account of his close contact with Nehru throughout his visit. As some of my officers put it, people are wondering why in these very troublous times Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek continues to meander through India with Nehru sticking to him like a burr. The rumour is roughly that the Marshal has come to ascertain to what extent India can help in Burma and elsewhere against the Japanese and that if he finds that India cannot give much help, he will on his return to China consider the question of coming to terms with Japan. His constant association with Nehru rather than with the Commander-in-Chief and the General Staffs is no doubt the reason for this rumour, for we know pretty well what Nehru with his anti-British bias will tell him. I recognise of course that the official statement from Chungking, dated February 19th, to the effect that an alternative to the Burma Road through Rangoon had been decided upon goes to contradict the idea which I have suggested, but a statement of that kind may be overlooked when the Press as a whole gives more publicity to the Marshal's discussions with Gandhi and his visit to Shanti Niketan. Speeches also such as those of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek and others go to show that China is never likely to make peace with Japan.

Your Excellency has recently written about the necessity of fighting against this defeatist attitude and this seems to be a typical example of the way in which the defeatist attitude is encouraged. The people are ignorant of what the position is; they tend to put the worst interpretation on such information as they get and to accept all kinds of rumours, such as this rumour that China will come to terms with Japan. Underlying this suggestion is of course the idea of an 'Eastern Federation' and some sort of alliance between China and Congress representing India.

I have thought it desirable to let you know this rumour; we are all a bit in the dark about the Marshal's visit and if some authoritative statement can be issued, it would stop all this dangerous speculation.

As regards the League attitude towards General Chiang Kai-Shek I have nothing very definite, but Chaudhri Khaliq-uz-Zaman told my Chief Secretary recently that Jinnah was to tell him that the League was willing to help in the war but owing to Congress demands were unable to do so, as Congress would oppose the war effort more vehemently because of the League support.

Then there is rather an interesting report which started from the Hindu Mahasabha, that there were secret negotiations between Congress and the league. Chandhri Khaliq-uz-Zaman with reference to this told Mudie as follows:

'Just before he went to the League Conference in Bengal, he was approached by Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai on the subject of an understanding between the Congress and the League. He said that many Congressmen now desired this and asked whether Khaliq would see Nehru on the subject. Khaliq, however, said that was useless as Jinnah and Nehru would eventually have to talk. Jinnah was told of this by Khaliq in Bengal, but so far has not been approached by Nehru. He had however been approached in the same sense by Bhulabhai Desai. Khaliq

told Kidwai that the League's Christmas resolution stood as regards co-operating with a party within the present constitution if they were given a reasonable chance of power. As regards the Centre, this would mean that the Congress and the League would join the existing Viceroy's Executive Council and in Section 93 Provinces it would mean Ministries. Khaliq's reaction is two-fold and I do not think that he can make up his mind. He feels that an understanding coupled with taking office might disarm criticism and so make Government's position easier. On the other hand if the League took office without doing so jointly with the Congress and so closing their mouth, the result might be definitely bad for the war, as the fact that the League were openly pro-war would make the Congress more certainly anti-war than they are at present. On the other hand he realises that Congress Ministries, pursuing a pro-war policy, would probably be unable to keep their Left Wing in order, which would make things difficult. He is also doubtful about "swapping horses, & c." I asked whether he thought that Nehru would be able to swallow so much that he has only recently said. He agreed that would be difficult; although Kidwai gave the impression that Nehru might think as he (Kidwai) did, that was by no means certain.'

All this goes to show once again how Nehru dominates Congress policy.

I am very grateful to Your Excellency for consulting me about the question of Herbert's meeting with Nehru. The Nehru problem grows more and more difficult. We have told District Magistrates to take action against the small fry who indulge in abuse of Government; and some action is being taken; in all cases it seems to me fully justified. But it puts local officers in a difficult position if action is not taken against leaders; it was Nehru's arrest on the last occasion that eased our position in this Province. I have already told you about the Gorakhpur speeches; after that he went on to Cawnpore to the All India Trade Union Congress and the following is the District Magistrate's report:

'On the 8th he addressed the Congress and attracted an audience of 10,000 people. He said that the British Empire was crumbling and the audience should make their own arrangements. Government's A.R.P. organisation was ridiculous. The British would not win any battle. The only battle they had won so far was the battle of Kalanga in Malaya when the Australians refused to fire on tea plantation strikers and Indian troops did so on the command of British officers. Nehru became very annoyed at pro-war slogans shouted by one section of his audience and finally lost his temper and threatened to take no part in the proceedings. Next morning he addressed about 2,000 students and condemned the communist group for favouring war effort. Next day addressing an audience of about a thousand in the city he repeated his argument that disorder and panic could only be avoided by the Congress and he ridiculed Government's A.R.P. organisation. He, however, said that he did not wish to oppose it "but our idea is that its way of doing this work is also worthless like all its other works." He also addressed three meetings in the rural area, two of which were attended by 9,000 people, at which he prophesied the end of the British rule and the necessity for people to organise themselves through the Congress.'

I have not myself seen the full report of the speech but I will examine it carefully. The only satisfactory feature is that he stirred up opposition from the pro-war communists. This is from another report of the meeting:

'The communists, handicapped by the absence of capable leaders in jail, were faced with a strong combination of Socialists and Congressites with J.L. Nehru to add the prestige and influence of his presence and personal advocacy. Despite this opposition the communists, while faring badly in the actual elections, managed to secure 60 per cent. of the votes on the war issue, and their strength made it impossible for the opposition to carry the delegates with them in a clear-cut victory for non-co-operation in the war. Nehru did not emerge with any credit from the proceedings

and dissatisfaction was expressed at his failure to appreciate and champion the cause of workers generally. As a result of the rivalry of the two main parties the Congress was largely a failure, and the Labour Conference was completely over-shadowed. On balance the various meetings held tend to demonstrate the existence of an increasingly strong section of labour in favour of co-operation in the war effort. Though exaggerated demands are made in resolutions passed by Cawnpore labour, the likelihood of any direct action on a concerted basis is small at the moment.'

As I have said in my earlier letter, I recognise the difficulty of taking action when Nehru is so closely connected with Chiang Kai-Shek, but if he goes further off the deep-end, another break with Congress seems to be inevitable.

7. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech in Calcutta Commenting on the
Reconstitution of the British War Cabinet and Congress
Responsibilities in the War, 21 February 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 138-40.

The inclusion even of progressive elements in the British Cabinet would not bring about any change in the present British policy with regard to India. Some new persons have come to power, new persons who are supposed to be more independent minded than the former men, and who have expressed a good deal of sympathy for India's freedom. I do not believe that the Cabinet would be willing to accede to India's demands and hence there is no question of any compromise between the Congress and the British Government.

The war is bound to bring tremendous changes in the present order. The new order may not be to your liking. Should you desire to have it according to your ideals and aspirations, you should strive for it and play your part. India, being a part of the world, cannot escape the effects of the war even if she is not invaded. The problem before you is not what you are going to do in case India is invaded. The onus of responsibility in this respect lies on the Government, but you know what kind of Government you have. Then the question is what should the people do. The statement issued by the Congress at the beginning of the war initiating its policy in this connection is in the right direction. Its first and foremost aim is the independence of India. The Congress has been expressing its opinion on the international affairs in a forceful manner for the last twelve years, and the importance of its opinion in international spheres has increased.

The war has now come near to your frontiers. The problem is whether you should strengthen the hands of your rulers in this war. The old attitude of the British Government towards India's demands still continues. That is regrettable no doubt. You must not look to any outsider for help. You must rely absolutely on your own inherent strength to achieve your independence. The pages of Indian history bear testimony to the fact how the lure of outside help has brought about India's slavery. The story of the imperialist venture of Japan and Germany is not unknown to you. Indians must stick to their own ideals even if they are difficult of achievement. But whatever happens, India will not bow down her head before any invader.

The Indian National Congress has repeatedly declared that if power is transferred to the people of this country, they will be responsible for their own defence but the British politicians are still repeating their blunders. If they had listened to the Congress two and a half years ago, the situation would have been different. We are prepared to take the responsibility even now. We may not be able to do things which we could have done before. But if that responsibility is given, we will not shirk it.

There is the immediate danger with the Japanese very near our borders. The A.R.P. work cannot be successfully carried out without the active cooperation of the public. Even in Britain the authorities have to work on popular lines before they can achieve any remarkable successes. The problem is more complex in this country where there is no sympathy between the rulers and the people.

A great responsibility in this respect lies also on the people themselves. Congressmen should take up the work of service and of educating the public about certain fundamental methods of protection in case of air raids. People should not get panicky; this will only increase their troubles.

8. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel on Chiang Kai-shek's Visit, 25 February 1942

CWMG, Vol. 75, p. 359.

.... About Chiang Kai-shek you will read in *Harijan*. He came empty-handed and left empty-handed. He amused himself and entertained me. But I cannot say that I learnt anything. And in any case what was there to learn? He had only one thing to say: 'Help the British anyhow. They are better than the others and will improve further hereafter.'

9. Telegram by Firoz Khan Noon to L.S. Amery Expressing Muslims' Apprehensions, Demanding 50% of Seats for Muslims in the Proposed Cabinet, Demanding Parity, also Pakistan, Offering a Threat of Civil War against Any Recognition Being Granted to Sapru Conference, 28 February 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 270-1.

Sapru Conference not non-party but all Hindu parties conference. Sapru and his colleagues although moved by patriotic sentiments have been serving as agents of Congress. Their aim is that if during the war India cannot become a Dominion, Government of India should pass into Indian hands under the existing Constitution, and thus establish Hindu Raj immediately. Moslems are at the moment extremely apprehensive that H.M.G. are step by step yielding to agitation of a vociferous party and giving way contrary to pledges which they have always given to Moslems, Princes and other minorities. Immediate Indianisation of the whole Cabinet will remove European element, on whom minorities can now depend for assistance in cases where Hindu majority makes a combination against them. Even now Cabinet overweighted against Moslems, three against five other Indians. If H.M.G. Indianise whole of Indian cabinet, then in the absence of safeguards which in any case have proved useless in the Provinces and in order to protect Moslems and other minorities, Moslems must have 50% seats in Indian Cabinet: else whole of non-Congress India, through sheer desperation, will create a serious situation adversely affecting the war effort. If H.M.G. contemplate making an immediate declaration of creating India Dominion, Moslems' demand for Pakistan must be conceded in the same statement. If you are about to declare that after the war India will be made Dominion, then Moslems expect that you will also declare that if Hindus fail to come to an agreement with Moslems Pakistan will also be granted. Otherwise Moslem India will be up in arms and you

will have North West Frontier problem also. Congress believe they can force the hands of H.M.G. and that is why they have made not the slightest move to win agreement of Moslems.

Only reason why Congress have not been able to create disturbances in India is that Moslems are not with them. But once H.M.G., through hasty or ill-considered decision, are forced to push Moslems into open opposition, Congress may decide to join hands with them and create greater difficulties than ever. Moslems here [are] apprehensive that new elements in power in London may enforce a policy of reconciling the irreconcilables, forgetting that the cup of patience of other parties [is] already full. No one can ignore the part that Indian Princes and Moslems are playing in the war effort, nor can it be forgotten that in spite of Congress opposition sixty-five per cent of new recruits are non-Moslems. If H.M.G. makes peace with the Congress agitators, they do so at very heavy cost. Congress already feel that they made mistake by going out of office in the Provinces; and so far as my information goes, they do not wish frankly to come forward and give an undertaking that they will help in war effort if restored to office, but they wish to use Sapru and others in securing for them Governments and Offices which they themselves are not willing to ask for, because in my opinion that do not intend to play cricket. Similarly at the centre, H.M.G. will be playing with fire, if they establish Hindu Raj in defiance of all the friendly elements who are responsible for great war effort of India at the moment. I feel it my duty to draw attention of H.M.G. through ourselves to the great danger that faces India if H.M.G. give in to browbeating by anti-British elements in this country, and against their pledges given to Moslems and others. It will be a betrayal of trust which Great Britain has always claimed to hold on behalf of all peoples of India and not only on behalf of those who are in the Congress camp. Irrespective of any pressure which may exist from china or from America, quarters which know little about India and look at British Commonwealth with eyes different to our own, I hope that H.M.G. will firmly stand by their duty which involves protection of best interests of the peoples of India as a whole.

10. L.S. Amery's Letter to Lord Linlithgow on Their Differences with Winston Churchill, the American Pressure, Attitude to Sapru Conference, and the Likely Result of Cripps Proposals, 2 March 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

2 March 1942

I expect your head is in a whirl, as is mine, over the developments of the last few days. There is a certain sense of humour in that Winston, after making infinite difficulties for both of us in respect of whatever constructive suggestions we put forward, has now, as is his wont—seen the red light (especially the American red light) overnight. There is equal humour in the fact that Attlee and Co., from whom I had practically no support before are not in full cry behind Cripps in clamouring for the maximum!

As a matter of fact it seems to me that the bark of the new declaration is in many ways more alarming than its bite. After all, the idea that our outstanding obligations should be settled by treaty, and that before the constitution comes into force, is only what you and I agreed upon in July 1940 and Winston said then he would fight to the death. We have safeguarded the Muslims over Pakistan. Last, but not least, we are turning down Sapru and only offering

in general terms some opportunity for co-operation to the Indian party leaders if they accept our general declaration for the future. Points I am not altogether happy about and propose to raise again in Cabinet, though so far overruled by the Committee, are the omission of a more definite statement about the Crown and the positive declaration about the future India's freedom to secede. This is, of course, in one sense self-evident, but its open announcement at this moment may mean trouble both as regards Nepal and Afghanistan....

My impression as to the whole business is that Congress will not accept. Gandhi may like it, but there must be many elements, of what I might call the Mahasabha Wing of Congress, who will be shocked by the idea that India may be divided if they are not prepared to make terms with the Muslims. Again, while some of the Congress leaders may be well content in fact that we reject the Sapru scheme of an all-Indian non-official executive, they will probably feel bound in practice to denounce us for it. My impression is that the most likely result will be a grudging admission that some advance has been made by us, but that is not sufficient to warrant Congress taking part in the government of the country beyond helping with A.R.P., &c., locally. I am not sure that that would be the best solution. Whether in that case you would still enlarge your executive by some Muslim League and minor party representatives or by someone like Rajagopalachari, who might possibly break away from Congress over it, you will have to judge for yourself.

As things go I am having to fight very hard to prevent the statement being issued at once without giving at least some reasonable time for your comments. The Cabinet are discussing them tomorrow and probably again on Wednesday and Thursday, and there is a push for a statement on Friday. Personally I am inclined to think it would be better for the statement to be postponed till Tuesday, with two days' debate on Wednesday and Thursday to follow. Anyhow that will all be settled before you get this. But what you will no doubt have to do immediately after the statement is to consider how to follow up the invitation addressed at large to the leaders of Indian political opinion to come forward to co-operate, both provincially and at the Centre. By the way, the idea is that the statement should first issue as a direct broadcast by the Prime Minister to the people of India, being read out simultaneously by the Leader of the House in each House. This is getting away from the normal practice of a declaration by the Viceroy, but is I think justified by the peculiar circumstances and by Winston's peculiar position at this movement in the war.

The war indeed is a much bitter issue, but changing from day to day too breathlessly for comment and I will say no more. Keep fit and keep up your courage. You will need all of it.

11. Winston Churchill's Telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt
Considering Granting the Right of Secession to Muslims,
Princes, and Untouchables, 4 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 309-10.

4 March 1942

We are earnestly considering whether a declaration of Dominion status after the war carrying with it if desired the right to secede should be made at this critical juncture. We must not on any account break with the Moslems who represent a hundred million people and the main army elements on which we must rely for the immediate fighting. We have also to consider our duty towards thirty to forty million untouchables and our treaties with the princes' states

of India, perhaps eighty millions. Naturally we do not want to throw India into chaos on the eve of invasion....

12. Winston Churchill's Telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt
Paraphrasing M.A. Jinnah's Telegram to Him Questioning the
Representative Capacity of the Sapru Conference and Asserting
the Demand for Pakistan, 4 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I, pp. 310–11.

4 March 1942

Message from Mr. Jinnah (President of the Moslem League and the Accepted Head of the Most Powerful Moslems Organisation in India).

The Sapru conference of a few individuals with no following and acting as exploring and patrol agents for the Congress have put forward plausible subtle and consequently more treacherous proposals. If the British Government is stampeded into the trap laid for them Moslem India would be sacrificed with most disastrous consequences, especially in regard to the war effort. The Sapru proposals virtually transfer all power immediately to a Hindu all-Indian Government, thus practically deciding at once far-reaching constitutional issues in breach of the pledges given to the Moslems and other minorities in the British Government's Declaration of August 8th, 1940, which promised no constitutional change, interim or final, without Moslem agreement, and that Moslems would not be coerced to submit to an unacceptable system of Government. The Sapru proposals would introduce major changes on the basis of India becoming a single national unit thereby torpedoing the Moslem claim for Pakistan which is their article of faith. Moslems entertain grave apprehensions and the situation is tense. They call upon the British Government in the event of any major constitutional move being intended to declare their acceptance of the Pakistan scheme if His Majesty's Government wish to have free and equal partnership of Moslems.

Note: The Pakistan scheme contemplates the creation of separate Moslems States in the Moslem majority areas independent of the rest of India, except so far as they accept joint control negotiating as separate political entities....

13. M. Hallett's Telegram to Lord Linlithgow on a Likely Congress
Reaction to the Proposals and on How 'Independence' Is Not the
Demand of All Indians or Even of All Congressmen but Only of
an Extreme Wing Led by Jawaharlal Nehru
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

4 March 1942

.... Declaration involving right of secession should satisfy moderate Congress body especially as it includes constitution-making body not unlike Constituent Assembly. But Nehru and left wing Congress may take the line that power to frame constitution will devolve on them after the war as Nehru's speeches show that he regards collapse of British Empire imminent. His views may prevail over those of the moderates. Congress may also contend that we are doing nothing during the war and this may receive support from Sapru and other Hindus.

Provided paragraph regarding option of accession makes it clear that non-acceding provinces will have advance on the lines of declaration and thereby [make] Pakistan possible, which I assume is the intention of paragraph b (i), Moslems should accept it provided they are also satisfied that no constitutional change is contemplated during the war, which I assume is the implication of paragraph (d) of declaration.

I consider with the exception of the left wing Congress and other extremists few really want independence or complete severance with British connection. Use of word 'independence' most undesirable as conveying the Impression of undue concession to left wing Congress and will therefore be resented by other political parties besides having very demoralizing effect on Indian Army and on all supporters of British connection and war effort.

14. Hassan Suhrawardy's Telegram to L.S. Amery on Congress,
M.A. Jinnah, Muslim League, and Azad Conference, 5 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I, p. 325.

5 March 1942

.... Congress despite its nationalist creed is dominated by caste-ridden Hindus in overwhelming majority. Muslims seriously apprehend suppression and destruction [of] their economic life, culture, religion and political self-expression. Jinnah is difficult, has given umbrage to several senior workers of Muslim League, who would like to serve its cause. Muslim League is undoubtedly exponent of Indian Muslim opinion and has achieved mass support.

Azad party just formed by some prominent individuals does not command Muslim confidence. Muslims [are] perturbed lest Hindu domination be established. Muslims have contributed and are eager to contribute all material support in war effort in much greater proportion to their population strength. They will resent any far-reaching decision without adequate investigation and hearing different groups.

15. Winston Churchill's Telegram to Lord Linlithgow on the Importance
of Sending Sir Stafford Cripps with a Draft, the Draft Being 'Our
Utmost Limit' and How Cripps Is Bound by It, 10 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I, pp. 394-5.

10 March 1942

I agree with you that to fling out our declaration without knowing where we are with the Indian parties would be to court outcome of what you rightly call a flop and start an acrimonious controversy at the worst possible movement for everybody. Yesterday ... we decided not to publish any declaration now but to send a War Cabinet Minister out to see whether it could be put across on the spot because otherwise what is the use of having all the trouble? Stafford Cripps, with great public spirit, volunteered for this thankless and hazardous task. He will start almost immediately. In spite of all the differences in our lines of approach, I have entire confidence in his overriding resolve to beat Hitler and Co. at all costs. The announcement of his mission will still febrile agitation and give time for the problem to be calmly solved or alternatively proved to be for the time being insoluble.

The document on which we have agreed represents our united policy. If that is rejected by the Indian parties for whose benefit it has been devised, our sincerity will be proved to the world and we shall stand together and fight on it here, should that ever be necessary.

I hope therefore that you will await Lord Privy Seal's arrival and go into the whole matter with him. He is of course bound by the draft declaration which is our utmost limit. Moreover, he will give full weight to the military and executive position in which India is now placed.

It would be impossible, owing to unfortunate rumours and publicity, and the general American outlook to stand on a purely negative attitude and the Cripps' Mission is indispensable to prove our honesty of purpose and to gain time for the necessary consultations.

My own position is that nothing matters except the successful and the flinching defence of India as a part of the general victory, and this is also the conviction of Sir Stafford Cripps. Do not therefore think of quitting your post at this juncture, for this might be the signal for a general collapse in British Indian resistance with serious rupture of political unity here. We have a very bad time immediately ahead but nothing like so bad as what we have already forced our way through.

16. L.S. Amery's Letter to Lord Linlithgow Discussing the Implications of Cripps Mission for Congress and Its Likely Outcome to Make Congress Understand That 'Their Game Is Up', 10 March 1942
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

10 March 1942

Your various telegrams, as well as those of the Commander-in-Chief and others more immediately affected, convinced the Cabinet of what I had felt from the first, namely, that the scheme worked out by the Cabinet Committee—and with which I did not disagree, so far as its main principles were concerned—was entirely unsuitable to figure as a public declaration. Even with the fullest simultaneous explanation in the House—and at one time the Cabinet wanted to have no explanation at all till the Indian reaction was ascertained—the thing would, I am sure have had an adverse reaction in all sorts of quarters, and be damned from the outset. Consequently, the only way out, and incidentally a way of gaining a little time, was to send someone to discuss and negotiate in order to find out how far Indians, when really brought up against the logic of the situation, would accept its conclusions. After all, once it is laid down that there must be agreement, and no coercion of important minorities, then the only conclusion is that things must wait indefinitely till there is agreement, or that the majority who agree go ahead, leaving the minority standing outside, which is indeed what has happened in the case of every British Dominion, where provinces have either stayed outside for a time, or made special conditions for coming in, or finally stayed out altogether, *e.g.* Newfoundland, New Zealand and southern Rhodesia. What we have been up against all the time is the hope on the part of Congress that its influence with the members of the Left Wing here and in America would push us into going back on the pledge of 1940 and make us, either as regards the future, or as regards the immediate present, take some step which prejudged the situation in their favour and against the Muslims and the Princes. Once they have been definitely told in so many words, and by someone whom they regard as not unsympathetic that their game is up and that they must either find ways and means of compromising with the minority elements,

or face the disadvantages of a divided India, they may really for the first time, take seriously into account what I have been trying to preach for the last two years, namely, the devising of some entirely new constitutional solution to meet the inherent difficulties of the situation. The same indeed applies to the Muslims, who will have to realize what Pakistan may involve in respect of Muslim minorities elsewhere, of the Sikh difficulty, of holding down the richer and more numerous Bengal Hindu minority, and last but not least of economic dislocation. In fact, I would say that every one for the objections you and others have seen to the declaration is an effective argument for the line of policy we are pursuing, both as a matter for discussion now with India leaders and or any future constitution-framing body.

The next question, then, was who should go out? I confess I felt at first that, both from your point of view and from mine, it might have been better if I had gone. The Secretary of State is in many ways the more obvious person, and you and I know each other's minds so well. Also, it might have given me an opportunity to go into the whole military and munitions situation with you and not only perhaps help you on my return, but also possibly to make a more effective defence in the House of Commons against the attack which is sure to be made upon the Government of India and upon the Government here, for India's not being more effectively prepared for her own defence. Nor did I think that I should have been altogether incapable of reasonable skill in negotiation, and I should at any rate have come enjoying a good deal of confidence from the Muslims. On the other hand, I am afraid my going would have been generally interpreted as committing the Government to nothing more than a very limited policy of talking about agreement. The Sapru crowd in particular resent all that I have said in the past in the way of bringing out the inherent difficulties of the Indian situation. From the point of view of putting across what is essentially a Conservative policy, both as regards the future and as regards the immediate refusal to transfer control of the Executive, there is much to be said for sending out someone who has always been an extreme Left Winger and in close touch with Nehru and the Congress. The Immediate effect on your Muslims, as with my Tory friends here, may be alarming, but the result in the end should be both to increase the chances of success, slight as they are, and to mitigate any blame thrown upon the Government as a whole for failure.

I think Cripps fully realises the difficulties in front of him, and the prospect of his being denounced both by Congress in India and by the Left Wing here, for having lent himself to so reactionary and limited a policy. I have just been having a long intimate talk with him and I feel confident that he really means to play the game by the Government policy and you. In these Cabinet Committee discussions I have found him, though sometimes a bit abrupt, and dogmatic in stating his views, always inclined to see the other point of view and anxious to come to agreement. I am assured by all my lawyer friends that he is first-rate and most moderate when it comes to settling a case out of court, and that is precisely what he is being told to do now.

I am sending with him Turnbull, my first Private Secretary, who knows the whole situation very well, and is a young man with both initiative in making helpful suggestions and courage when it comes to warning his chief of the possible consequences of a mistake. No doubt you will also be turning Hodson on to him, who by now must know a great deal about the personalities whom Cripps could most easily influence to begin with, so as to secure their support with the most intractable ones afterwards. From that point of view I hope Coupland will still be in India when Cripps arrives and am wiring you suggesting that he should postpone his return if he has not already started.

As regards Indians, he will of course be inundated by people who want to see him and no doubt you could help him greatly out at any rate a preliminary selective list and perhaps intimating to some of those who you think he ought to see, and who live in remoter parts of India, that it might be worth their while coming up to Delhi and seeing him. His idea is that a fortnight ought to be enough to show whether he can succeed in his mission or not. If he feels that he really can, he might then possibly stay on a little longer to complete things. Otherwise he would break off and fly home. He would like to see Gandhi, but quite realises the undesirability of a pilgrimage to Wardha, especially at an early state of his visit. It is of course possible that he might fly to Calcutta and see Gandhi there on his way through. Anyhow, that is a matter which he can discuss with you when he arrives. Winston's view was that he ought clearly to stay with you for the first two or three days, but that after that he might, like Chiang Kai-Shek, be in his own house where he can see his visitors informally and unofficially.

I have felt very much for you over all this business. But I do hope you will not think, either that I have not attempted to defend your position, or that the Cabinet have been intentionally inconsiderate in handling the whole question. The fact is that when you and I at the beginning of the year took the view that for the moment there was nothing to be done, we did so both in view of the merits of the situation in India itself and also in view of Winston's own vehement attitude, as indicated not only by our difficulties over the release of prisoners, but by his special telegram to you while he was away in America. Meanwhile, the pressure outside, upon Winston from Roosevelt, and upon Attlee & Co. from their own party, plus the admission of Cripps to the War Cabinet, suddenly opened the sluice gates, and the thing moved with a rush. You must not forget how terribly preoccupied Winston and indeed others have been with the terribly serious situation as it has developed in the east, and how inevitably he has grudged the time and labour he has given to trying to do, what he has never done before, master even the elements of the Indian problem. He was, I think, profoundly impressed when he realized for the first time the difficulties involved in carrying out his first 'happy thought'. But the whole business has been a tremendous extra strain upon him, and I hope you will allow for all this in judging of the manner in which it has all been rushed through. There has been real limit to what I have been able to do in representations to him or to the Cabinet Committee in so far as they involved delay or reconsideration of the document in part or as a whole. I really don't know what would have been the effect upon Winston of your considered alternative, if he had not, by the time it came in, already made up his mind to have no declaration at all.

My own belief is that in the outcome the frank discussion of these matters with Indian leaders by a man like Cripps will have greatly cleared the air and eased the position for the future, whatever the immediate outcome. I will I think also have cleared the air both here and in America, and that is not unimportant from the point of view of the prosecution of the war. Lastly, by the time the discussions are over you may be up against a position in India in which even the ultimate question of the Punjab boundary may seem a detail compared with immediate and possibly devastating dangers.

Anyhow, be assured of one thing and that is that neither Winston nor I feel that you can possibly be spared from your place at this juncture. Apart from the loss involved to the drive behind the whole war machine, your going at this moment would have precipitated the whole question of policy into acute party conflict and might well have broken up the Government here. So, old friend, whatever else happens, you must see this thing through.

All good luck to you.

17. L.S. Amery's Telegram to Lord Linlithgow Giving a Provisional Outline of Sir Stafford Cripps's Programme, 12 March 1942
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

12 March 1942

Following is provisional outline of Cripps' plans:

- (1) He expects to arrive [in] Karachi by air about March 21st/March 22nd but will notify you later of precise date. He will be accompanied by Turnbull from this office and A.D.K. Owen and Graham Spry as Secretaries but will be grateful if you will make arrangements for confidential Secretariat assistance.
- (2) If agreeable to you he would like to spend first two days or so with you and to have discussions with yourself, Commander-in-Chief, Governors, Members of Council and other official Advisers whom you think he should see. He particularly desires to see Hallett, Glancy, Herbert and Lumley but doubts whether he need see other Governors except possibly Cunningham if he can come to Delhi.
- (3) Thereafter he would like to move to a private house and there begin conversations with Indian leaders. His intention is not to stay longer than about a fortnight unless it becomes clear that there is a definite prospect of doing business and on the basis of War Cabinet's policy. If conversations develop favourably he would probably have to stay longer. He does not however want to undertake a general tour of Provinces although he does not exclude possibility of visiting the more important if that became essential. He wishes to confine his conversations in Delhi at any rate in the first instance to a representative but restricted selection of people of real influence and following. On this subject he thinks that he should certainly see in the first instance those named in paragraph 4 and would be glad if you would advise them privately that they will be invited to see him and ask to hold themselves in readiness to come to Delhi between approximately March 26th and 5th April. He desires this because he is anxious that it should not be possible for any of them to say that they were precluded from seeing him through inability to travel to Delhi at short notice but it would clearly be best not to send out these invitations until as near the time as is consistent with this requirement. Cripps may suggest further additions to the list and would be glad of your advice as to whether you consider that there are any important omissions from it bearing in mind point of view represented by Members of your Council whom he will meet in any case.
- (4) Following is list: Congress—Azad, Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Pant, Kher, Khan Sahib. Muslim League—Jinnah, Sikander, Nazim Uddin, Saadullah. Liberals—Sapru and Jayakar. Muslim non-League—Fazlul Huq, Allah Bakhsh. Mahasabha—Savarkar. Depressed Classes—Ambedkar. Labour—Joshi. Sikhs—one or two recommended by the Governor of the Punjab. States—Nawanagar, Bhopal, Bikaner, Kashmir, Chhatari and Krishnamachari.

He would probably also desire to see representatives of Europeans and Anglo-Indians but this can be arranged later.



18. T.B. Saprú's Letter to Shiva Rao Speculating about How the Mission Would Proceed and the Likely Responses of M.A. Jinnah, Hindu Mahasabha, Jawaharlal Nehru, and C. Rajagopalachari, 12 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. R-192, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

12 March 1942

... I have just written a letter to Sir Jagdish Prasad a copy of which I am enclosing herewith. I personally think that it is good that Sir Stafford Cripps is coming out. In the long run we shall succeed though for the moment Jinnah's opposition and Amery's support of the Muslims has led to some delay in bringing about the changes.

A meeting of the Standing Committee at this juncture seems to me to be wholly unnecessary. I should also not invite any Conference such as suggested by you. The moment we invite men like Allah Bux and Fazlul Huq etc., we shall stimulate still further opposition of Jinnah. I think we have got to proceed cautiously particularly because I feel that the perverse efforts of Jinnah to block the way to progress are going to fail in the end ...

I do not know whether there will be a small Round Table Conference of 8 and 10 people when Sir Stafford Cripps arrives or whether he will see representatives of different parties individually. I am not at all hopeful about Jinnah and I have a fear that if Jinnah adopts a truculent attitude the Hindu Sabha will adopt a similar attitude. As regards the Congress I believe Rajagopalachari will be able to influence a section of the Congress people and even Jawaharlal does not seem to me at present in a fighting mood. It will be a pity if no settlement on the communal issue is arrived at, but I have lost all hope about Jinnah....

19. Jagdish Prasad's Letter to T.B. Saprú Speculating about M.A. Jinnah's Tactics vis-à-vis Sir Stafford Cripps, 12 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers I, No. P-242, Roll No. S1/4, NMML.

12 March 1942

The Prime Minister's announcement has been published. As we do not know what proposals Sir Stafford Cripps is bringing out, it seems to me unnecessary to call a joint meeting of the Standing Committee and the co-signatories of the January cable at this stage. If you agree with this view you might tell Iswara Dutt to let the Associated Press know that the meeting will not take place immediately.

I think Jinnah has succeeded in preventing H.M.G. from making a declaration forthwith. I fancy his tactics will be to attack Cripps on the ground that he is pro-Congress and pro-Hindu in order to frighten him into making concessions to Muslim League demands which he otherwise would not think of making. However let us wait patiently to see what the proposals are and to what extent he will be cowed down by Jinnah's clever propaganda. It is something that a man of his first rate ability and independence of mind is coming out with the full authority of the British War Cabinet. I am glad you have welcomed his appointment in a press interview ... For the moment we have to hold our peace and not be too optimistic of results....



20. Madam Chiang Kai-shek's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru Discussing Sir Stafford Cripps's Arrival in India

Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 479–81.

13 March 1942

My dear Mr. Nehru,

I am enclosing a report the Generalissimo made at the Party Headquarters the Monday after we returned from India via Kunming. The actual date, I believe, was March 9th. The speech will be printed in pamphlet form to be distributed to heads of the provinces, governmental organisations, etc. but will not be given to the press. The English translation of which I am sending you a copy is being telegraphed to our Embassies in Washington and London with instructions that our Ambassadors hand them to Churchill and Roosevelt. The Generalissimo and I both feel that we owe it to our Indian friends to speak the truth as we see it, though as we were guests of the British Government, politeness constrains us from openly criticising the assertion that real power cannot be given to India because of the lack of unity among her people etc. I saw in the papers today that the London *Chronicle* made quite a case of this, and was I furious?

I see from the papers that Cripps is coming to India armed with proposals, and your non-committal remark when questioned by Reuters regarding your reaction of the coming visit. Who, my dear friend, said you were not a statesman?

I wrote you a letter the day after I arrived in Kunming, the 22nd February, so my record shows. As I have received no reply, I wired our Consul-General at Calcutta whatever it was delivered to you, and when. A reply just came from him,—that he received it on March 5th and sent it by special messenger to you on the 6th. Ye Heavens above—why so long in transit? I cannot imagine. I do not know if and when you will receive this. I am sending it by General Mao of the Aeronautical Commission with instruction to give it to the Consul-General in person for immediate delivery to you. It was only a few minutes ago that I learned of General Mao's departure to Calcutta tomorrow.

At this writing, I am in Huangshan in the house where you visited us. You remember, it is situated on the south bank across the river from Chungking. We came here last night—to seek a little solitude. Since our home-coming, the impact of work and people has been terrific. In the city one feels the jostling of humanity everywhere, in the air, in the streets, and even in the privacy of one's study. The crossing the recrossing of invisible thought waves disturb the surface of one's serenity, and there is no escape from the turbulence. I suppose there must be a psychic explanation of this manifestation of mass phenomenon. Anyway, here in the hills, one feels release from suffocation and over-crowding. I love India, but the glare from the white buildings in Delhi blinded me almost. Here is Chungking, we are almost always in a fog. The vague mists shrouding the mountain horizon on all sides seem soft and kindly, and the green vegetable terraces (do you remember them?) on the hillsides are a welcome sight to one who is not used to brilliant sunshine. Do you remember what terrific headaches I used to have every time I stepped out of the house in India? But just the same I enjoyed my visit and I would not have forgone it for anything....

I happen to have in my letter case a letter I received from Cripps soon after my arrival home on the 5th of March. I am enclosing it just to let you know that when you were in prison, how keenly we felt for you. But without it, you ought to know.

The Generalissimo has been telegraphing Roosevelt on Indian conditions. Our latest new news from him is this: Roosevelt wired that at the Peace Conference the representative from India should be chosen by Congress, and represent real national India. 2. He thinks that a solution of the Indian problem might be found in dividing India into two, namely Moslem and Hindu. Both the Generalissimo and I wired to my brother T.V. that the second premise is entirely wrong, and should not be considered for one single second. India is as indivisible as China. The fact that there are religious differences amongst her people does not mean that politically they cannot agree if given the opportunity to settle their diversity of views uninterfered with and unabatted by a third party.

The Generalissimo is calling me to stop as General Magruder has come for a conference with a message from Roosevelt. I never seem to be able to get a minute to write to you a real letter. Always, always, irksome duties clamor, and I just scribble some unrelated, inconsequential remarks. But don't get too irritated with me. I haven't had time to myself to think consecutively and perhaps it is just as well, for certainly I cannot aspire like Gandhiji to evolve any course of action which would be worthwhile by pure 'hard-thinking'.

To my friend the Vagabond—Salam!

21. Letter from J.B. Kripalani to Rajendra Prasad on the Importance of Their Meeting Cripps in Order to Avoid Confusion, 13 March 1942
Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, p. 137.

13 March 1942

.... You wrote your letter before the statement was made. You may now be inclined to stay away. But I think this meeting is an important one inasmuch as some of us will have to meet Cripps. In that case we must decide more precisely our policy than hitherto. If we don't, he may get one impression in his talk with Rajaji and Vallabhbhai and quite a different idea from Jawaharlal. So I think some kind of unanimity will have to be evolved.

However if your health does not permit, you should not take the trouble. At this time it is more necessary that you keep your health.

22. Letter from Shiva Rao to T.B. Saprú on the Stories Circulating Around in the Official Circles on Why Sir Stafford Cripps Is Being Sent to India and What Would Be the Outcome, 14 March 1942
T.B. Saprú Papers, No. R-194, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

14 March 1942

We have no information yet as to when Cripps is arriving. The expectation is that he will be here about the end of next week. From a London message today it looks as though he is planning to spend 3 to 4 weeks in India... I heard from a friend yesterday interesting though disturbing accounts of a conversation among very high officials. I shall not disclose names in this letter; that I shall reserve for a later opportunity when we meet. It seems one official said: 'it is comic that Cripps should be sent out to solve the Indian problem. We may or may not agree with Jinnah's demand for Pakistan; but we must take it into serious account.' 'What will

the Princes do?’ he asked another official who is in touch with the Princes. The latter observed that any claim to be acceptable to India as a whole must have the support of the Muslims, the depressed classes and the Princes. But he was certain that the Princes would reject any plan which would bring the Congress into power, even on a coalition basis. A third official said ‘I am certain that Cripps will go back a discredited man. Churchill is sending him out not because he has hopes of settlement but because Labour is giving trouble. Therefore he is being sent out so that after spending a futile month in India he may go back and report to his party that India is hopelessly divided and nothing can be done.’ This conversation reveals the official outlook in Delhi. Though it has been officially said that the viceroy is delighted with the idea of Cripps coming to India, I have little doubt in my mind that efforts will be made to make this task as difficult as possible.

23. Letter from Master Tara Singh to Maulana Azad and to Other Congress Leaders Reminding Them That the Congress Should Stick to Its Promise Made to Sikhs at Lahore in 1929, 15 March 1942

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, pp. 197–8.

15 March 1942

Sir,

It is now certain that Sir Stafford Cripps is coming to make an effort to settle the problem of Indian Swaraj. This appears to be a genuine effort and may prove to be a final one. It is also clear that Sir Stafford Cripps will try to settle the communal problem in India. So I wish to remind you that the Congress gave a promise to the Sikhs in 1929 by a resolution passed in the Annual Session held at Lahore that the Congress would be no party to any communal settlement which would not satisfy the minorities including the Sikhs. I, therefore, suggest that in order to avoid any misunderstanding and to remove misapprehensions, some Sikhs representing the Sikh community may be consulted at every stage of the communal settlement.

24. T.B. Sapru’s Letter to Jagdish Prasad on Who among the Non-party People Should Meet Sir Stafford Cripps, and on M.A. Jinnah and Hindu Mahasabha, 17 March 1942

T.B. Sapru Papers, No. P-246, Roll No. S1/4, NMML.

17 March 1942

... I did not mean when I wrote to you my last letter that we should appoint five or six gentlemen to wait on Sir Stafford Cripps. I simply mentioned their names as persons who might meet Sir Stafford Cripps if he was inclined to see some men belonging to the Non-Party Conference. I shall be delighted if among these men you include Sir Ardeshir Dalal and Sir Maharaj Singh. I do not know what procedure Sir Stafford Cripps will follow when he arrives in India, but I fancy that he will invite some representatives of different groups and parties to meet him at Delhi. In my opinion it is very necessary that with your recent knowledge of the Executive Council, which is so fresh, you and N.N. Sircar should certainly meet him.

I anticipate much trouble from Jinnah, but I also feel that any cussedness on his part is not now going to block our way. I have written to Jayakar to bring his influence to bear on the Hindu Sabha leaders not to follow the tactics or strategy of Jinnah. On the fundamental question of Pakistan they should be firm but it would be a mistake in my opinion to adopt generally an unreasonable attitude or to come out with provocative communal cries. This is not the time for agitation. It is the time for settlement.

Sir J.P. Srivastava has written to me to say that I must try to bring about a settlement between the warring elements by which I understand him to mean that I must bring about a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League and between the Hindus and the Muslims. I am definitely opposed to any step like this being taken at this juncture as I have no doubt that once a move is made by us Jinnah, even if he condescends to talk to us, will try to inflate his demands and if such a conference fails it will be open to him to point out to Sir Stafford Cripps that there is no chance of a Hindu-Muslims settlement, and this will have a disastrous effect. I should, therefore, let things alone until Sir Stafford Cripps comes. When he has put the terms before us then the situation may change. I have accordingly written to Sir. J.P. Srivastava and added that if Sir Sikandar or any other Muslim leader takes the initiative I should not object, but so far as I am concerned I am not prepared to take any step forward in this matter. I hope you agree. I do not know when Sir Stafford Cripps is arriving. Perhaps you at Delhi may be able to know something about the date of his arrival and about his programme. I hear that at Delhi some members of the bureaucracy are talking about the impossibility of a settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims and between British India and the Indian States. I have no doubt that these old tactics will be tried again, but at this critical juncture we have to guard ourselves against these tactics and the most effective means of countering this strategy can only be by our adopting a reasonable attitude....

25. T.B. Saprú's Letter to Shiva Rao Commenting on a Fear in Germany and Japan That There May Be a Settlement between Great Britain and India as a Result of Sir Stafford Cripps's Visit, 17 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers I, No. R-197, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

17 March 1942

... I am fully alive to the internal dangers which we must face during the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps. We have to guard ourselves against the (1) diehards among the Muslims, (2) diehards among the Hindus, (3) diehards among the Congress, and (4) diehards among the Princes and our best weapon of defence and offence can be an attitude of reasonableness on our part. I should not sacrifice substance for mere theory.

... Last night for the first time I heard the broadcast of Subhas Bose. It seems to me that Germany and Japan are alarmed by the fear that there may be a settlement between India and England as a result of Sir Stafford Cripps' visit and that is the reason why Subhas Bose and his friends in these countries are every day sending hymns of hate against the British and preaching to us a revolutionary idea. I should be sorry if there were some foolish people in India to fall in the trap. What is the record of Japan in Korea, Manchuria and China? It is absurd for anybody to imagine that Japan is going to give us independence. Why should it fight our battles? You may have grievances against the British but that does not mean and

ought not mean that we should be prepared to accept the yoke of Japan. I hate the very idea of the Japanese treading the soil of India.

26. T.B. Saprú's Letter to Shiva Rao Underlining the Necessity of Maintaining a Neutral Attitude in the Press Till the Proposals Are Announced, 18 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. R-198, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

18 March 1942

I received two telegrams last night from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy. The first said that there was no objection to my issuing to the press his letter to me conveying the message of the Prime Minister. Accordingly I am issuing it to the press. You will read it tomorrow morning. The second telegram says that Sir Stafford Cripps has expressed the desire to see me while he is in Delhi and although his dates are still uncertain it would be appreciated if I could be ready to come to Delhi on a near date after March 26. It is regretted that no precise date can be settled at present but earliest possible notice will be given when exact arrangements are known. I am writing and writing to him that except on the 28th of March when I must be in Benares I can leave for Delhi on the 29th, 30th or the 31st of March ...

I am glad to observe from the reports in the press that the Congress is on the whole adopting a moderate attitude and if any weight can be attached to what has appeared in the Muslim League organ '*The Dawn*', the Muslim League too seems to me to be climbing down. I am not, however, at all sure what attitude Jinnah will take. His lieutenant, Nawab Liaqat Ali Khan is still indulging in irritating language. No less anxious I am on account of the attitude of the Hindu Maha Sabha. They seem to me to be no less fanatical so far as language itself is concerned than the Muslim League. Bhai Parmanand has already written a long article in his paper '*The Hindu Outlook*' criticising me and I fear that the Hindu Maha Sabha people will insist that there should be no concession of any kind whatsoever in favour of the Muslims. I have written to Jayakar and one or two other friends to use their influence. The newspapers have also great responsibility at this juncture. I do not think they serve the country at all by speculating wildly as to what Sir Stafford Cripps is bringing with him. Some of them indulge in very rosy forecast and others in very pessimistic forecast. I do not think it is fair to the country to indulge in such forecasts. I hope you will preserve a very fair attitude in the press. If we are disappointed we can then severely criticise the Government, but until then we should not do anything to prejudice Sir Stafford Cripps' mission in public eye. That is my advice to you.

27. Shiva Rao's Letter to T.B. Saprú Commenting on the Congress Attitude and Speculating about M.A. Jinnah's Reactions to Winston Churchill's Announcement, 21 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. R-201, Roll No. S1/4, NMML.

21 March 1942

... I have seen Maulana Azad on his return from Wardha. I agree with you that the attitude of the Congress seems to be moderate and reasonable. I am told that Jinnah is worried by two things: first by a passage in Churchill's announcement that a minority will not be allowed to

exercise any indefinite veto on the wishes of the majority, and secondly, by invitations being issued to Allah Bux and Fazlul Haq who have rejected his leadership. Whether he will go so far as to boycott the Cripps Mission, I do not know. But that is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

... Frankly, I am most worried by the renewal of the Japanese advance towards Upper Burma ...

28. Letter from A. Hope, Governor, Madras, to Lord Linlithgow on C. Rajagopalachari and on Why the Proposals May Not Be Accepted by Congress, 22 March 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

22 March 1942

Since I saw you in Delhi, the chief items of interest here have been the fall of Rangoon and the prospective visit of Cripps.

I do not think the former has had any marked effect on the public who, I am afraid, are getting used to these evacuations, but there is no doubt that our prestige is very low, and there is a terrible amount of defeatism.

Rajagopalachari has been touring a great deal and I must say has done good in telling the people not to panic and saying that India has nothing to gain from the Japanese; on the other hand, his openly defeatist attitude that Britain can no longer defend India and that if 'freedom' were granted the nation would miraculously be able to defend itself, is causing a lot of harm.

As regards Cripps' visit, this is generally welcomed, but the non-Congress elements are nervous that we are going to give everything away and leave them in lurch. However, people are prepared to await events, but the first enthusiasm for the visit is inclined to evaporate as the tremendous difficulties are realised. As I have already told you, I am not optimistic, as I have long thought, and still do, that Congress will take nothing short of independence. Also, although the after-the-war proposals are concrete, the opting-out suggestion will, to my mind, stultify the whole scheme, attractive though it may be to Jinnah.

29. Letter from G. Cunningham, Governor, NWFP, to Lord Linlithgow on Local Reactions among Hindus and Muslims in NWFP to Sir Stafford Cripps's Visit

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

22 March 1942

There has been little public comment in this Province about Sir Stafford Cripps' coming visit to India, but it seems to be generally felt that His Majesty's Government have taken a wise step in sending him. However much the Hindu and Muslim views may diverge, most people hope that some decision is shortly to be made which will at any rate put a stop to political controversy during the war. Another point on which I think there is agreement among educated Indians is that at the end of the war India ought to be put as far as possible on the same footing as other self-governing Dominions of the Empire.

The disagreement comes—as it always has come—on the practical details of any such advance. Hindus and probably some Congress Muslims are pleased to think that Sir Stafford

is a friend of Nehru's and hope that the practical difficulties will be solved in a way acceptable to Hindus and Congress; I think they hope above all that a Pakistan solution may be avoided. It is true that Dr. Khan Sahib, who now represents this province on the All Indian Congress Committee, has stated in an interview that nothing that Cripps can do can now satisfy Congress. But from what he said to me privately I would judge that this statement was only 'for the shop-window.'

Educated Muslim opinion is interested only in the provision of sufficient safeguards for their community. But it is very difficult to get any constructively helpful ideas out of them. A discussion generally ends in something like this: 'Whatever happens, we must not be under Hindu domination.' But Muslims are gratified that at any rate His Majesty's Government will not come to a decision without giving Jinnah a full opportunity to represent the Muslim case to Sir Stafford.

The official Muslim League attitude has been stated in one or two unimportant meetings (the so-called 'mass meeting' of 10,000 Muslims in a big Peshawar mosque as a myth); resolutions were passed to the effect that, if His Majesty's Government made any declaration favourable to Hindus and Congress, the League would make 'any sacrifices' necessary to protect Muslim interests.

All that I have written merely re-states the old problem. But as everyone seems at the moment to be reserving judgement, pending Sir Stafford Cripps' visit, it is difficult to say more. I have noticed a considerably increased speculation on the likelihood of Congress Ministries returning to office. There has also been the inevitable comment that Mr. Churchill's announcement was forced out of him by our reverses in Malaya and Burma. I have heard no suggestion that the unexpected step of sending Cripps to India was the result of disagreement in Government circles as to future Indian policy.

30. Letter from H. Dow, Governor, Sind, to Lord Linlithgow on His Estimation of Cripps Proposals, M.A. Jinnah, and Muslim League
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

22 March 1942

The fact that the plan to be brought is the agreed plan of the British cabinet, when individual views on Indian problems must vary very widely, should be some augury that it is a workable one, and likely in its main features to be acceptable to the majority of reasonable men. The choice of Sir Stafford Cripps as envoy, and his investiture with plenipotentiary powers, should go a great way to shake the intransigence of the small knot of unreasonable men whose influence in Indian politics is so great. I cannot, therefore, think of any measures open to his Majesty's Government which would have a greater chance of success than the course they have taken.

I write, of course, in entire ignorance of what the plan is. But it seems to me that no plan is likely to gain the immediate acceptance of all parties, and in some ways the resulting position will be more difficult if it is acceptable to one of the main parties (which I take to be Congress and Muslim League), than if it is acceptable to neither. In the first alternative we are merely back at the present stalemate, with the hope that Sir Stafford may be able to induce an attitude of mind favourable to its resolution. But in the second, the British Government will be accused of abject surrender to the demands of the other party.

Ultimately, I see little hope of a solution that will not involve coercion of an unreasonable minority, and the proper objective would seem to be to reduce the minority to the smallest possible limits and to ensure that its opposition shall be forced into constitutional and not violent channels.

I have always felt that Jinnah would compromise on 'Pakistan' if he could be assured of a system that would give the Muslims the same permanent dominance in the Punjab and Bengal, with their narrow Muslim majorities, as is already secured to the Hindus in the south and Centre, and the more so if this were coupled with the reduction to the essential minimum of the functions of the Central Government. I do not know how this could be brought about, whether by weightage or rectification of boundaries; difficulties in the way are very great, and I am not unmindful of the history of the partition of Bengal. Also the position of my own Province, where the Muslims with their large majority might be enjoying Pakistan in peace and quietness if they could only agree with each other, but which is actually being run by the Hindu minority, indicates further difficulties of such a solution. There is no denying that the Muslims are politically backward, and

'While the Plough tips round the Pole
The trained mind outs the upright soul.'

Within the Province of Sind the reaction to the prime Minister's message has been almost entirely favourable. My own Premier is very pleased about it, and the Hindu Press has welcomed it eagerly. The Muslim Leaguers are more reticent, but it has to be borne in mind that most people who call themselves Muslim Leaguers in Sind know or care very little about the League's policy or affairs, and are actuated almost entirely by opposition to Allah Bakhsh and his Hindu supporters. There are hardly more than half a dozen Muslim leaguers in Sind who have any contacts with Leaguers outside the Province.

31. 'Forget the Past': Editorial Making a Strong Plea for the Release of Political Prisoners on the Eve of Cripps's Arrival

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23 March 1942.

It was in 1931. The Gandhi-Irwin Agreement had been concluded. The Congress had agreed in pursuance of that settlement, to participate in the proceedings of the second session of the Round Table Conference in London. Mahatma Gandhi had been chosen the Congress's sole representative and accredited spokesman. It was at that time that the late Mr. J.M. Sen Gupta, Bengal's leader and member of the Congress Working Committee, sought an interview with Sir Stanley Jackson, Governor of the Province. In the interview that took Place Mr. Sen Gupta stressed the urgency of political appeasement by a general amnesty. It should be noted in this connection that while all the civil disobedience prisoners had been set at liberty under the terms of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement, men and women alleged to have been guilty of violent acts remained in jail. The vast majority of such prisoners belonged to Bengal. Mr. Sen Gupta realised that even if Gandhiji succeeded in reaching an honourable settlement with the British Government on the Indian political issue it would have no chance of success in Bengal, and indeed in any part of India, unless something was done to enlist political prisoners' co-operation and support in the carrying on of a constitutional experiment. Evidently Sir Stanley Jackson was impressed by Mr. Sen Gupta's argument and the point of view the Congress leader so earnestly placed before him. Mr. Sen Gupta was then permitted to put himself in touch, by personal

interviews or otherwise, with the prisoners scattered over the Province. He met some of the leading members of the alleged terrorist parties, argued with them, listened patiently to what they had to say and was convinced, more than ever before, that the prisoners were prepared to do their utmost to make any constitutional experiment a success but only on honourable terms and on the basis of transference of real power.

Mr. Sen Gupta decided to proceed to London to tell the British public something about the tragic happenings in Bengal, especially in Chittagong, after the Armoury Raid. On the eve of his departure he wrote a letter to Sir Stanley Jackson, making certain bold and startling suggestions for the immediate consideration of the Governor. None knew about the contents of that letter save Mr. Sen Gupta's stenographer, Mrs. Sen Gupta and one or two friends and co-workers. Without disclosing any secret, it may be stated that Mr. Sen Gupta asked for an interview between the Governor and Mr. Surya Sen of Chittagong. How this suggestion was received by the Governor we do not know. For Mr. Sen Gupta, alas, never returned to the land of his birth a free man.

We are recalling this history in view of the impending visit of Sir Stafford Cripps. Hundreds of men and women have been interned or externed or otherwise subjected to so many restrictions under the Defence of India Act and the rules made thereunder. We do not include in this category men and women who have been convicted by competent courts of law of grave offences against the State. These interneers or externeers have been arrested and detained on reports of the secret service police. In any circumstances such reports are likely to err on the side of excess of zeal. In a war emergency extraordinary rules lend themselves to gross abuses in the hands of uninformed and uninstructed men suffering from an exaggerated notion of their importance in the scheme of things. We have grave doubts if policemen generally understand the full implications of this war and the growing realignment of forces in this world conflict. We suspect that they do not realise that, in the opinion of a large number of the victims of the Defence of India act and its rules, the war has entered upon a phase when all the forces of progress and democracy must be mobilised for a crushing blow to Fascism. Policemen, like all custodians of vested interests, think in terms of yesterday, of a past that is dim and distant, and of an order that is crumbling. These are persons on whose reports men and women must not be allowed to be interned or externed or otherwise subjected to restrictions. They require to be verified, scrutinised and interpreted in the light of new happenings in India and throughout the world. The old story of 'criminals', actual or potential, must be wiped out and the Government and the people must begin on a clean slate. Mr. Stalin, for instance, is one of our greatest allies to-day. But how many men in the police or the bureaucracy fully understand it except mechanically? They are not to blame. Unfortunately they have not had the requisite training and social background for a correct appreciation of the tremendous forces at work and the profound changes taking place under their self-complacent noses.

The most effective way to help Sir Stafford Cripps in his mission is to create a receptive atmosphere and that way is the way of a general political amnesty in this and other Provinces. The Ministers and Governors must take the initiative out of the hands of servicemen who, accustomed as they are to red-tapism or the technique of bureaucratic correctitude, have neither the imagination to visualise big changes nor the capacity to adjust themselves to the requirements of revolutionary transformation. Bengal should give a lead in this matter because on her shoulders may fall, immediately or in the near future the arduous task of resisting the enemy's first blow. It would be a mistake in this crisis to rely absolutely on police reports or resort to a dilatory procedure of expert investigation by Tribunals or Committees. We ask the

Ministers to follow Mr. Sen- Gupta's bold lead, given more than a decade ago, and have a frank discussion with the security prisoners and then announce their policy. The announcement should not be delayed unnecessarily or unduly. Time is of the essence of the situation and every moment is precious. The enemy is not only ruthless but is eager in a subtle manner to exploit every prejudice for his sordid gains. He must be caught napping before it is too late.

So far as the convicted prisoners are concerned, those involved in the Chittagong Raid and some others have already stated their views on the immediate duty of their countrymen in this war. To keep these men in jail even today is a tragic failure of statesmanship. There is absolutely no reason why they should be forced to submit to a life of frustration when their services would be of inestimable value in our fight against the Fascist forces. Let us, therefore, all begin to think furiously and act decisively. Let us forget the memory of the past and wipe out the history of a bygone age. Let us put our heads together and assist Sir Stafford Cripps, each in his own way, in pursuing his mission in an atmosphere of trust and conciliation. Let us not, even unconsciously, play into the hands of the enemy. The recent Axis broadcasts afford us a warning, a lesson and a moral. Should we not profit by them? The enemy must be beaten on every front.

32. 'No Diplomatic Detachment': Editorial Expressing Optimism on the Changed Context Surrounding Sir Stafford Cripps's Visit to India, and Hoping That This Would Lead to the Formation of a National Government in India

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24 March 1942.

We extend a hearty welcome to Sir Stafford Cripps on his arrival at New Delhi on Monday. His position at home and prestige abroad mark out the Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons as one of the World's front rank statesmen and moral strategists. It is not an accident. It is not a case of Sir Stafford Cripps occupying such a great position of trust and responsibility in the British Administration by a fluke or of Mr. Winston Churchill getting round him and enlisting his support, direct or indirect, to Britain's Imperialist policy. By his wide sympathy as well as by his tactful and resolute handling of an exceedingly delicate Ambassadorial mission in circumstances of utmost difficulty Sir Stafford has come to represent that irresistible urge for revolutionary changes which is manifest in different parts of the civilized world today. Sir Stafford, as sportsmen put it, has virtually walked into the British team of War Ministers. His meteoric rise is a striking example of the inexorable operation of an historic necessity. Those who think that Sir Stafford Cripps has come out to India as Mr. Churchill's man are making a mistake. Those who believe that Mr. Churchill is the same diehard he was, say, five years ago do no justice either to the Prime Minister or to their own intelligence.

Circumstances change. New forces emerge. With new circumstances and new forces men also change. In the war as it is being waged to-day no Government on the democratic side can function with any measure of success unless it is a popular Government in the fullest sense of the term enjoying public confidence and representing their aspirations. Mr. Churchill is the rightful occupant of 10, Downing Street because Britain and her men and women have acclaimed him as their intrepid national leader. British democracy, dim and dormant in normal times, is beginning to assert itself even to the extent of destroying its accepted forms and hoary traditions. Evidence in support of it is furnished not only by Mr. Churchill's commanding

position but also by Sir Stafford Cripp's appointment as Leader of the House of Commons without formal Party support behind him. That is real democracy in action and we have such a Government in mind when we demand the setting up of a national Government at New Delhi with plenary authority to mobilize the moral and material resources of the nation for an uncompromising fight against Fascism. The Viceroy need not count much in the conduct of the administration except formally. The British Government must no longer loom in the picture in relation to Indian affairs, including the defence of the land save where the projected National Government seeks collaboration and assistance. What is needed is that the personnel of the National Government should have, in the first place, no doubt and hesitation about their immediate duties in regard to this war. They should, secondly, have the courage and imagination to express the will of the progressive forces in the direction of war strategy. In that view of the matter one need hardly attach much importance to the doctrine of responsibility to the existing legislature or to the King-in-Parliament. That is legal formalism which we can well afford to keep in the background provided there is no manner of confusion about our objective and our means to achieving it.

We are not of those who have persuaded themselves to believe that national freedom is matter of gift from any British or other external authority. National freedom is a condition of things that must come and come immediately by our own organized efforts, may be in alliance or co-operation with the progressive forces that have been released by the war. There is room for Indo-British collaboration. There is room for collaboration between India and China. There is room for collaboration between India people and the determined men and women of the Russian Soviets. But there must be no suggestion of domination on one side and subordination on the other. The white man's burden must be the burden of a distant song. It is in this light that we interpret Sir Stafford Cripps's mission. Anything short of it is bound to meet with failure and we take it that the Lord Privy Seal entertains no illusion on this fundamental point. He has come to his country not to present us with a gift carried over the air in a leather suitcase. Presumably he is here not to dictate and coerce either. Indian leaders and Sir Stafford Cripps can help each other greatly only if they realize that they are pursuing a common cause and seeking a common end. That common cause and that common ideal must find expression in stubborn resistance to the forces of reaction as well as in the building up of a Federation of free and autonomous States against the background of revolutionary economic, social and political planning.

What Sir Stafford Cripps's plans are for the emergency or for post-war reconstruction we do not know. We think, however, that without wasting time by encouraging desultory talks or unhelpful negotiations Sir Stafford Cripps should immediately extend his hand of co-operation to the representative men of India in setting up a real national Government whose personnel, powers and perspective must not in any way suffer from moral or political inadequacy. There is undue emphasis in certain quarters upon a British declaration as to India's post-war status. In our judgement that status is largely and essentially in our hands, declaration or no declaration, provided in this emergency we can get together the right type of men to form the National Government with full powers. In the process of organizing defence against aggression or penetration of Fascist forces a National government thus formed will be in a position to shape and dominate the course of post-war events. What matters most is the interim machinery as envisaged in Sir Stafford Cripps's scheme. Is it too much to expect that leaders of Indian political parties will sit round a table and try to evolve a joint formula on the basis of Indian freedom before meeting the Lord Privy Seal individually or collectively? The crisis and the impending

threat to India's security and territorial integrity should serve as a unifying force even as the growing peril to British freedom has brought Mr. Churchill, Sir Stafford Cripps and major Attlee upon a common national platform. That way lies hope. Any other way is the way of disaster.

His Excellency the Viceroy, if we may remind him respectfully followed a wrong procedure by interviewing men and women in an endless procession and then making his August declaration. We hope Sir Stafford Cripps will not repeat it. He must be one amongst us sharing our anxieties and reflection in his posture and approach our aspirations. For we must proceed on the assumption that our anxieties are his and that his aspirations are also ours or else there is no basis for collaboration in a struggle which is professedly a struggle for freedom and democracy. An atmosphere of diplomatic detachment or ambassadorial sanctity will not prove helpful in this crisis. That is the wrong way, the undemocratic way and the way that breeds suspicion. It must be abandoned. The days of colonial trusteeship are gone and the collaborators in freedom must all agree to work on a footing of equality, no matter whether for the time being they happen to be Viceroys, Governors, Ambassadors or leaders of political parties.

33. 'A Public Scandal': Editorial on the Plight of the Evacuees

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24 March 1942.

The Government of India have issued a Press Note, to which we referred in our leading article three days ago, contradicting some of the charges made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his statement. 'The whole question of racial discrimination,' said Pandit Nehru, 'in evacuation and in the subsequent treatment of evacuees is a public scandal of the first magnitude and those responsible for it from the Indians Overseas member down to the local officials have to make answer for it.' We say it is nothing short of it. The Government gain nothing—they can by no means save their face by trying to refute this or that charge which Pandit Nehru may have leveled against them in his statement. The broad fact is that they made a serious muddle right from the beginning, although comforting assurances in this regard had been given by high officials. It appears they seldom learn any lessons, even in times of peril. Reports of evacuation muddle came from Penang. The same thing was perpetrated in Singapore. The descriptions which Mr. Mallal and Mr. Jumabhoy, President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore, have given are shocking. With the Japanese advance in southern Burma, particularly since the bombing of Rangoon on the 23rd of December last, Indians in Burma began to leave for their home. But the officials of the Department of Indians Overseas and their Agent in Burma utterly failed to tackle the situation.

One reason for this was their lack of imagination and foresight. They should have thought that evacuation of a large Indian population by sea, particularly when ships were so scarce, was not a feasible proposition. In one of our leading articles in January we suggested to the Government of India not only to open up the land routes from Burma to India but to make adequate arrangements for food and water for the evacuees. We also asked them to send a few officials and non-officials to go to Burma and look after the arrangements for evacuation. So far as we know, this was not done at the proper time. The land routes were opened, if we are not much mistaken, only the other day and only as a result of insistent public outcry. Instead of taking all these measures in time, would it be believed that the Government's Agent in Burma tried to persuade Indian labourers, who had started on their perilous trek to India, to return to Rangoon? And for what? Either to be bombed to death by the Japanese or to be

looted and assaulted by the Burmese hooligans! If we remember aright, we were told at one time by Government that the Burmans were very hospitable to the Indian evacuees. Have not subsequent reports shown that it is at the hands of the Burmese themselves that our countrymen have suffered most?

Burma's Indian population is said to be just over a million. Out of this, 65000, as Mr. Bozman, Secretary to the Overseas Department, stated the other day, came to India before the middle of February. Let us assume that from the 15th of February up to date the same number has reached India, judging from the large-scale evacuation that took place during the last 3 or 4 weeks. Roughly two lakhs of our nationals in Burma have come back and nearly 8 lakhs still remain in Burma under what condition Heaven only knows. Fancy how woefully the Government bungled in evacuating only about 2 lakhs of people from Burma! Does Pandit Nehru exaggerate when he says that 'this government has lost competence in everything and even the words used by their officials ring false in this particular manner'? Panditji's words may be rather strong but they are nonetheless true. Evacuation is not a new problem. Every country either involved in war with the Axis powers or threatened by them—and which country is there today which is not so threatened?—has had to face it. Remember how tactfully England did it in the worst days of 1940 and 1941. Why could it not be done by the authorities here?

The evacuation problem here has assumed grave proportions to-day. Debates have been held in the Central Legislature. Gruesome stories are being told by refugees and their accounts have been published in the newspapers. Thousands have been coming by the land route to India every day. Many are reported to have died of thirst and hunger and disease. The terrible hardships they underwent and are still undergoing beggar description. Well, these reports and accounts cannot all be brushed aside as unfounded. Slightly magnified they might have been in one or two particulars but they are substantially correct. And the Government will admit this. The tragedy is that the bureaucratic Government still remain and function as before despite this 'public scandal'. The reason simply is that they are irremovable and irresponsible to public opinion. Would all this have happened, if we had an efficient and full-fledged National Government in India to-day?

The Government of India officials should remember that this is no time either for issuing Press Notes on evacuation or giving replies to questions or debates in the Legislature. The foremost duty of any Government in these serious times is to maintain the public morale at a high level, so that people might face the impending danger fearlessly. Do Government officials know what a grievous disservice has been done in this regard? Discrimination was reported from Malaya. The Government admit that discrimination may have taken place also in the matter of evacuation of Indians from Burma. Did they not unconsciously allow themselves to play into the hands of the wily Japanese who have been daily propagandising about the white and the non-white?

The trouble is that the officials in this country do not realise the true implications of this total war. They are still rooted to their old-time traditions. They still move in the same old groove—they still stick to their bureaucratic methods and policies. They little realise that these methods and policies have absolutely no place in a total war—a war in which utmost efficiency, both in military and civil matters counts more than anything else. Unless they eschew their old and effete ways of thinking and doing things and unless they choose to move with the times, it is far better for them to bid adieu to their responsible offices rather than stick to them and create a muddle. The situation caused by the war demands a new outlook and a new approach

to problems. The problem of Indian evacuees has become stupendous. It has also many side issues. We have got to see that the evacuees are allowed to return to India safely and, as much as possible, with comfort; we have got to look after those who have come to India after having lost their all and we have got to look after the interests of lakhs of Indians who are still in Burma. These demand immediate solution and along lines suggested by public opinion. Will the Government of India be once more prompt and businesslike and rise to the occasion?

34. Statement to the Press by Sir Stafford Cripps, 23 March 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 141, NMML.

I have come to India to discuss with the leaders of Indian opinion conclusions which the War Cabinet have unitedly reached in regard to India. I am here to ascertain whether these conclusions will as we hope be generally acceptable to Indian opinion. Obviously it would not be appropriate for me to say anything further about the precise nature of the proposals at this stage beyond the indications which were given by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons. Their chief object is to set out finally and with precision the practical steps which his Majesty's Government to the Indian peoples. We believe that a generally acceptable line of practical action can be laid down now, and that thus the main obstacle to India's full co-operation in her own defence will have been removed. We feel confident that with the political atmosphere thus clarified the leading political organisations will be enabled to put forward their maximum effort in preserving their country from the brutalities of aggression. How best their effective participation in the counsels of their country can be immediately arranged will be another matter for discussion.

I have come here because I am, as I have always been, a great friend and admirer of India and because I want to play my part as a member of the War Cabinet in reaching a final settlement of the political difficulties which have long vexed our relationships. Once these questions are resolved, and I hope they may be quickly and satisfactorily resolved, the Indian peoples will be enabled to associate themselves fully and freely not only with Great Britain and the other Dominions but with our great Allies, Russia, China, and the United States of America so that together we can assert our determination to preserve the liberty of the peoples of the world.

There is no time to lose and no time for long discussions. I am sure that in the circumstances of today the leaders of the main parties and interests in India will be ready to take quick decisions.

My intention is to stay at Delhi for two weeks, for there are many urgent and important matters to be attended to in England, and I believe that within that time, with energy and goodwill, the essentials of success can be achieved. During so short a visit I shall, of course, not be able to travel about in the country and see everyone I should like to meet. I hope that my friends in India will understand that my time is short and will forgive me if I am unable to see them before I leave. My association in the past has been more close with my friends in the Congress than with the members of other parties or communities, but I am fully impressed with the need in any scheme for the future of India to meet the deep anxieties which undoubtedly exist among the Muslims and the other communities. I shall therefore embark upon my task with a mind equally open to all points of view—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and others. I believe that the proposals of the War Cabinet will appeal to the Indian leaders since they are the unanimous result of the deliberations of a body of people who were known in the past to have widely differing outlooks upon the Indian question.

I shall be spending the first two days with the Viceroy, who has cordially welcomed my mission, and shall then have the opportunity of meeting the Commander-in-Chief and other Members of the Executive Council and the Provincial Governors. The Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Chamber of Princes and the Hindu Mahasabha have been asked to nominate their own representatives to hold discussions with me and representatives of the Sikhs, the Liberal Party, and the Scheduled Castes have also been invited to meet me. I shall of course see other representative people including Provincial Premiers.

I am confident that both the Indian press and the press in other interested countries will give their help in the great cause of Indian self-government and defence and will not by untimely speculation or by the spreading of uninformed and ill-considered rumours prejudice the chance of a successful settlement of the outstanding issues.

35. Sir Stafford Cripps's Press Conference I

M. Subramanyam, *Why Cripps Failed* (Documented Account from the Indian National Point of View of the Cripps Negotiations), New Delhi, 1942, pp. 54–8.

29 March 1942

The following is a report which appeared in the Indian press of the Press conference held by Sir Stafford Cripps at New Delhi on March 29, 1942, at which he handed over copies of the Draft Declaration to press representatives. Though official reporters were seen taking notes and Sir Stafford promised that the official report would be made available to the press, no such report was supplied:

‘That Constituent Assembly can start with a declaration of Independence,’ said Sir Stafford Cripps at a Press conference held at New Delhi on March 29, 1942, explaining the implications of the Cabinet’s draft declaration. Whatever the legal arguments about the Balfour Declaration were, it had been accepted as a fact that the Dominions could secede. Sir Stafford, therefore, agreed that the Constituent Assembly was completely free to decide whether the new Union of India should remain within the Empire or go out.

According to the post-war plan outlined by Sir Stafford, a Constituent Assembly is to be set up immediately after the cessation of hostilities. The procedure is as follows—first, new elections to provincial legislatures; second, the entire membership of the Lower Houses electing one-tenth of their number, by proportional representation, to the Constituent Assembly; and, third, the signing of a treaty between H.M.’s Government and the constitution-making body for ‘the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands.’ The States are to be represented in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of British India representatives, but it has been left to the Rulers of the States to decide how their representatives should be chosen—whether by election or nomination. The result will be that, while two-thirds of the Constituent Assembly will consist of elected representatives from British India, the remaining one-third will merely be the nominated representatives of the Rulers of the States. With reference to this point, Sir Stafford explained that under the existing treaty arrangements, they could not force the States to participate in the Constituent Assembly or compel them to choose their representatives in any particular manner. ‘We have not the same control over the Indian States as we have over British India,’ said Sir Stafford.

Certain interesting points were, in this connection, clarified by Sir Stafford. He said, firstly, that it was obligatory on every province to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Secondly, though they could not force any State to join it, the desire of the British

Government was that as many States as possible should participate in it. Thirdly, there would have to be some method for grouping small States. Fourthly, there would be no insistence on any reservation for the Services or British vested interests. Fifthly, the new Union of India would be completely free to decide its future relationship with other countries including the United Kingdom. Sixthly, if any differences were to arise in connection with the treaty, there might have to be some kind of arbitration. Seventhly, the members elected to the Constituent Assembly need not necessarily be members of the electoral college but should be persons capable of being members. And, eighthly, Sir Stafford gave it as his personal estimate that the constituent Assembly might take about a year to complete its work.

Describing the Constituent Assembly as a sovereign body which was free to do anything—even to say that they did not want a Governor-General—Sir Stafford said that they did not want to impose anything on India, ‘not even a time-limit’. He went on to say that if the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities came forward with some other agreed plan for the composition of the constitution-making body, H.M.’s Government would accept it. Asked what was meant by ‘cessation of hostilities,’ Sir Stafford said there was a difference between this and the ‘termination of the war.’ There might be a difference of one or two years between the cessation of hostilities and the end of the war. The idea was that the constitution-making body should be set up as early as practicable after the cessation of hostilities. Sir Stafford also said that the decisions of the Constituent Assembly would be by majority votes.

Sir Stafford then explained the plan for accession or secession of provinces. If at the end of the Constituent Assembly proceedings, any province or provinces did not wish to accept the new constitution and join the Union, it was free to keep out—provided the Provincial Assembly of that Province, by a substantial vote, say not less than 60 per cent, decided against accession. If it was less than 60 per cent, the minority could claim a plebiscite of the whole province for ascertaining the will of the people. In the case of the plebiscite, a bare majority would be enough. Sir Stafford explained that for completing accession there would have to be a positive vote from the Provincial Assembly concerned. The non-acceding provinces could, if they wanted, combine into a separate union through a separate Constituent Assembly, but in order to make such a Union practicable they should be geographically contiguous.

With reference to the interim war period, Sir Stafford said that the British Government could not transfer to the Government of India the responsibility for and the control and direction of the defence of India. ‘If there is an Indian Defence Member, he will not be able to direct or control,’ he said. Drawing a distinction between control and direction, which, under the orders of the War Cabinet, the Commander-in-Chief exercised, and the organization of military, moral and material resources which was the task of the Government of India, Sir Stafford expressed the view that they would be false to their duties if the British Government did not retain this responsibility and control, as it was necessary for the effective defence of India. ‘The defence of India will not be in Indian hands, even if all the parties want it,’ he declared. It would be the worst thing for the defence of India; it would disorganize the whole defence arrangements, and such disorganization would be fatal. He then pointed out that the Government of India would have a representative on the War Cabinet and have the same position in that body as Australia or any other Dominion.

Sir Stafford explained the difference between technical military control and political control. If the Indian Army were to be under the Government of India and the British troops here were to be under the British Government, it would mean that there would be two different armies

in this country under two different political controls. That, he said, would lead to confusion and inefficiency.

Sir Stafford declined to say anything specific about the last paragraph of the document dealing with immediate arrangement envisaged in the Government of India Executive, but he said: 'The intention of this paragraph is to indicate to the Governor-General, who is responsible for the formation of the Government of India, the broad lines upon which in accordance with the scheme that Government may be formed. All the details of the formation of that Government are for the Governor-General to decide, and we have not attempted and should not attempt to take that responsibility out of his hands.' Nothing was obligatory on the Governor-General, but he could Indianise the Executive Council. The general direction was laid down in the paragraph. The object was to give the fullest measure of government to the Indian people at the present time consistent with the possibilities of the present constitution which could not be changed till the end of the war. But there might be some small change to be made with regard to the composition of the executive Council, particularly the condition that there should be three service members of ten years' standing.

Sir Stafford added: 'The intention of the document, as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence, is to put power in the hands of Indian leaders.'

Sir Stafford concluded: 'So far as the Governor-General could, within the sections of the existing constitution, he would attempt to form his Executive Council with a body of Indian leaders who could give leadership to the country and could help to direct the counsels of the country in the Executive Council of the Commonwealth, in the War Cabinet and of the United Nations in the Pacific War Council.'

Regarding the working of the new Council under the proposed interim scheme, which, he said, covered the provincial field also, Sir Stafford said that it would have to be within the present constitution, but he indicated that a good deal could be done by changing the conventions or adopting new ones—he particularly mentioned that the Executive Council could become a Cabinet.

Sir Stafford made it clear that 'the scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole.' It would not be possible to retain only the part relating to the immediate arrangements at the Centre and discard the rest of the draft scheme.

'Would you not agree to joint responsibility between England and India for defence?' asked a correspondent.

Sir Stafford said joint responsibility for defence had been conceded so far as the document laid it down, that His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India.

'Would you agree to give internal defence to an Indian?'

'There is a fallacy in speaking of the internal defence of India,' replied Sir Stafford. When there was a state of war it was impossible to dissociate internal from external defence. Taking a hypothetical case like the movement of troops from, say, Madras to Calcutta, he said it might be said to be a purely internal matter but really it was a question which depended upon a multitude of other questions such as whether the Japanese were likely to take Ceylon, the position in Burma, the placing of the fleet in the Pacific and whether there were other troops available to move from the Middle East, etc. It would be impossible to dissociate the internal movement

of troops from the general strategy and tactics of the war. So long, again, as a large portion of the effective army, air force and navy had to be brought from British and other Dominion sources or others, it was essential that the control of the movement of all those forces should be under a centralized body. They were so today through the Commander-in-Chief under the control of the Chiefs of Staffs who got their directions from the War Cabinet.

‘It would be dishonest to say that an Indian Defence Member would be responsible for the defence of India,’ added Sir Stafford.

He referred to the decision to appoint an Indian member to the War Cabinet and said it was in that Cabinet that decisions as to strategy were made. He suggested that the full membership of the War Cabinet was the important thing, and not the mere appointment of a Defence Member.

His attention was drawn to the position in Australia. ‘The position in Australia today,’ he said, ‘is that the whole thing is under American control.’ (Laughter.)

In the course of further answers, Sir Stafford revealed that the draft declaration which was published today was not the identical document with which he had come to India. He had made certain changes, he said, after coming to India. Asked whether the draft was final, he replied amidst laughter: ‘it is final for today.’

In reply to a question whether he, as a Socialist, was satisfied with the proposals, Sir Stafford declared: ‘With all the views that I have, I am satisfied that this offers the maximum chance of the greatest unity in India.’

With reference to treaties with the States, Sir Stafford reiterated, ‘The British Government will stick to its treaties,’ but he envisaged that those relating to economic matters might have to be adjusted.

When one Pressman pointed out that in the Constituent Assembly there would be no representation for the Centrally administered areas like Delhi, Sir Stafford admitted that this was a matter of detail which would have to be considered.

Sir Stafford indicated that as soon as the constitution was settled everything would be transferred to India. If some provinces decided not to accede, then so far as they were concerned they would not be parties to the constitution.

‘If, for a year, in a constitution-making body, the Indian communities meet together in order to forge a united constitution for India, they will probably succeed,’ said Sir Stafford. ‘If they do not, we can do nothing more to help them to succeed. If after having done that they want to separate, nobody in the world can stop them.’

The object, he added, was to offer a method by which there could be a United India, governed by Indians, and we were not going any longer to take up an attitude which would justify the charge that it was the British Government which was preventing a United India, because they were relying upon differences between Indians. ‘Unfortunately, our experience in the past ten years has been that the Indians have not yet solved the problem or put forward a joint scheme for the giving of self-government to India.’

He made it clear that in case there were non-acceding provinces which were not financially self-supporting the British Government would not undertake financing them. They would have to decide before they decided not to accede whether, when they did not accede, they could support themselves financially.

Did the scheme mean that Pakistan had been conceded? asked a correspondent.

Certainly not, replied Sir Stafford.

Would the Indian Union have the right to take expropriatory measures? asked another correspondent.

The Indian Union would be free to take all measures open to a sovereign State to take.

36. Sir Stafford Cripps's Broadcast, 30 March 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 141, NMML.

I want tonight to give you a short explanation of the document which was published in the Press this morning, and which gives the proposals of the British War Cabinet for the future of India, a document unanimously agreed upon by every member of that Cabinet.

First of all you will want to know what object we had in view. Well, we wanted to make it quite clear and beyond any possibility of doubt or question that the British Government and the British people desire the Indian peoples to have full self-government, with a constitution as free in every respect as our own in Great Britain or as of any of the great Dominion members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. In the words of the draft Declaration, India would be, 'associated with the United Kingdom and other dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.'

There is however an existing constitution which regulates the central and provincial Governments of India and everyone agrees that in these troublous times we cannot here and now set about forging a new Constitution. It is far too important a matter for the future of India to be improvised in a hurried way.

The principle on which these proposals are based is that the new Constitution should be framed by the elected representatives of the Indian peoples themselves, so we propose that immediately hostilities are ended a Constitution-making body should be set up consisting of elected representatives from British India, and if the Indian States wish, as we hope they will, to become part of the new Indian Union, they too will be invited to send their representatives to this Constitution-making body, though, if they do, that will not, of itself, bind them to become members of the Union. That is the broad outline of the future.

Now what is to happen in the meantime?

The British people are determined to do their utmost for the Defence of India and we are confident that in that great task the Indian peoples of all races and religions are eager to play their full part.

Let me read to you what the statement says on this point—

'(e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India.' So ends the document.

The Governor-General, whose task it is to form the Central Government of India, has done his utmost to assist me with my mission, and I am certain that the Indian leaders can rely upon

him to find the best way in consultation with them for carrying out the general principle laid down in the Clause that I have just read to you.

So much for the general framework of the proposals. But, as we all know, the most vital and difficult question is that which concerns the interests of the various communities amongst the Indian peoples.

I will not attempt to go into any of the historical origins of these difficulties, let us instead look at them as a present fact. In the great sub-continent of India there is more than one people, there are many peoples and races as there are in the great sub-continent of Russia. Our object is to give to the Indian peoples full self-government with complete freedom as to how they will devise and organize their own Constitution.

There are those who claim that India should form a single united country, there are others who say it should be divided up into two, three or more separated countries. There are those who claim that Provincial Autonomy should be very wide with but few centrally controlled federal services; others stress the need for centralization in view of the growing complexity of economic development.

These and many other and various ideas are worthy to be explored and debated, but it is for the Indian peoples, and not for any outside authority, to decide under which of these forms India will in the future govern herself.

If the Indian peoples ask our help it will of course be gladly given but it is for you, the Indian peoples, to discuss and decide upon your future Constitution. We shall look on with deep interest and hope that your wisdom will guide you truly in this great adventure.

We ask you therefore to come together—all religions and races—in a Constitution-making body as soon as hostilities are over to frame your own Constitution.

We have specified the form which that body will take, unless, and this is an important point, the leaders of the principal sections of Indian opinion agree between themselves before the end of hostilities upon some other and better form.

That Constitution-making body will have as its object the framing of a single Constitution for the whole of India—that is, of British-India together with such of the Indian States as may decide to join in.

But we realise this very simple fact. If you want to persuade a number of people who are inclined to be antagonistic to enter the same room, it is unwise to tell them that once they go in there is no way out—they are to be forever locked in together.

It is much wiser to tell them they can go in and if they find they can't come to a common decision, then there is nothing to prevent those who wish, from leaving again by another door. They are much more likely all to go in if they have knowledge that they can by their free will go out again if they cannot agree.

Well, that is what we say to the Provinces to India. Come together to frame a common Constitution—if you find after all your discussion and all the give and take of a Constitution-making assembly that you cannot overcome your differences and that some Provinces are still not satisfied with the Constitution, then such Provinces can go out and remain out if they wish and just the same degree of self-government and freedom will be available for them as for the Union itself, that is to say complete self-government.

We hope and expect to see an Indian Union strong and united because it is founded upon the free consent of all its peoples; but it is not for us Britishers to dictate to you, the Indian peoples, you will work out and decide that problem for yourselves.

So we provide the means and the road by which you can attain that form of the absolute and united self-government that you desire at the earliest possible moment. In the past we have waited for the different Indian communities to come to a common decision as to how a new Constitution for a self-governing India should be framed and because there has been no agreement amongst the Indian leaders, the British Government has been accused by some of using this fact to delay the granting of freedom to India. We are not giving the lead that has been asked for and it is in the hands of Indians and Indians only whether they will accept that lead and so attain their own freedom. If they fail to accept this opportunity the responsibility for that failure must rest with them.

We ask you to accept this fulfilment of our pledges in the past and it is that request that I have put before your leaders in the document which you have now seen.

As regards the position of minority communities within the new Indian Union, I am confident that the Constitution-making body will make just provision for their protection. But in view of the undertakings given to these minorities by His Majesty's Government in the past we propose that in the Treaty which, under the draft Declaration, will be concluded between His Majesty's Government and the Constitution-making body, the new Indian Union should undertake to protect the rights of these minorities. If there should be any non-acceding Provinces a similar Treaty provision would be made in respect of minority communities within their borders.

I have already indicated to you the position as to the immediate future.

I know that His Excellency the Viceroy has the greatest hope that the acceptance in principle of this document by the leaders of Indian opinion will make it possible for him to start forthwith upon the consultations which will enable him to implement the principle laid down in the last paragraph of the document which I have already read over to you.

It contains one essential reservation—that in respect of the responsibility for Defence. This reservation does not mean that the Governor-General and his Executive Council will or indeed could be excluded from taking an effective share in the counsels for the defence of India. In this wide-flung war, defence cannot be localized in a single country and its preparation must permeate the activities of every department of Government and must demand from every department the fullest co-operation. If His Majesty's Government are to take full responsibility for the conduct of the naval, military and air defence of India, as it is their duty to do, then the defence of India must be dealt with by them as part of the world war effort in which they are now engaged, and the direction of that defence must rest in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief under the War Cabinet and their highest staff officers. But, as I have already pointed out, the Government of India must also have an effective share in the Defence counsels and so we have decided that the Commander-in-Chief must retain his position as a Member of the Executive Council.

In order, however, that India may have her full voice in this central control of strategy, defensive and offensive, not only in India itself but in all the inter-related theatres of war, we have invited the appointment of a representative Indian to the War Cabinet and to the Pacific Council of the United Nations—that is one of the ways in which India will have her full say in the counsels of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations as an equal partner. And when it comes to the making of the peace, India will appoint her own representatives to the Peace Conference side by side with those of the other free Nations and so make her contribution to the building of a new world order.

I am confident that nothing further or more complete could be done towards the immediate realization of the just claims and demands of the Indian peoples. Our proposals are definite and precise. If they were to be rejected by the leaders of Indian opinion, there would be neither the time nor the opportunity to reconsider this matter till after the war and it would be a bitter blow to the friends of India all over the world.

I consider it a high honour that it has fallen to my lot to be the messenger of the War Cabinet in a matter of such vital and far-reaching importance to the future world order. I personally am convinced of the soundness and completeness of these proposals, and I have asked your leaders to give to them an ungrudging acceptance.

There will still be difficulties perhaps—the result of the distrust which has grown up between us in past years, but I ask you to turn your back upon that past, to accept my hand, our hand of friendship and trust and to allow us to join with you for the time being in working to establish and complete your freedom and your self-government. This as you may know has long been a cause dear to my heart and it is with the greatest hopes that I look to the events of the next few days which may if wisely handled seal for ever your freedom and our friendship.

Your country today is in peril from a cruel aggressor, an aggressor whose hand has soaked in blood and suffering great areas of China with its friendly and democratic peoples, an aggressor allied to those nations who have deluged with tragedy the once peaceful plains of Russia. Against those aggressors we and the Allied Nations will fight to victory.

The outlook is overcast for the moment, but believe me I have no doubt as to the final result. Russia, the United States, China and Great Britain have resources which the Axis and its allies can never defeat.

We stand by our duty, growing out of our past historical associations, to give you every protection that we can, but with your willing help and co-operation it can be made more effective and more powerful.

Let us enter upon this primary task of the Defence of India in the now sure knowledge that when we emerge from the fire and travail of war it will be to build a free India upon foundations wrought by the Indians peoples themselves, and to forge a long-lasting and free friendship between our two peoples. Regrets and recriminations as to the past can have no place beside the confident and sure hopes of the future, when a free India will take her rightful place as a co-worker with the other free nations in that world reconstruction which alone can make the toil and suffering of the war worth while. Let the dead past bury its dead! And let us march together side by side through the night of high endeavour and courage to the already waking dawn of a new world of liberty for all the peoples.

37. Sir Stafford Cripps's Press Conference II

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 574–8.

31 March 1942

Q: If the proposals are accepted by the various leaders, am I to understand that at the end of the war you would use in the relevant section of the Westminster Statute the expression 'India'... (Question incomplete).

A: That would not be necessary; because it will be rather a waste of time till we know whether the new Indian Union is going to be completely independent or is going to remain a dominion. That will be a question for the new Indian Union to decide. It won't be possible to bring one

word 'India' into the Westminster Statute. The Statute of Westminster contains broad regulations regarding Canada and Australia. When the Statute of Westminster was made, it was a recasting of the relationship of all the dominions, each one with its special reservations or regulations, and that was the result of an imperial conference when we recast the picture and put it all into one single book. That was a constitutional development. Anything that happens since then need not go into the Statute of Westminster. It is a sequel to what then happened. It does not require to be put actually into that. The way in which the new Indian Union would come into being would be by an Act of Parliament in England repeating the whole of the existing legislation as regards India and re-enacting in a single section the new constitution.

Q: What would be the exact constitutional implications of those expressions which you made at the last press conference and in the broadcast talk? Don't you think that they should all be put in the form of an annexure to the document?

A: That is what I should propose to do. If there were an acceptance of it, I should then take the various points, about which I have made statements, amplifying the document, and I shall then submit the document to various leaders and say: 'This is my understating of the various points and I will make it an extra addition to the document.'

Q: Can you say whether the new dominion will be based on any contiguity of boundaries? Will financial stability be a pre-requisite?

A: There is no pre-requisite at all.

In reply to a question, Sir Stafford said: 'There is no contemplation of any dominion being set up which consists solely of Indian States.'

Q: Last night in your speech you mentioned 'peoples of India,' 'British people', and the 'Indian peoples'. Any significance?

A: You are really a little bit too meticulous. I was drawing a contrast between the two unions (Britain and India). I meant it territorially. I did not mean to omit the Welsh from England or any of the peoples of India.

Q: There is a reference to India being represented in the Allied Council. We have one representative already. His designation is Agent General. Does that imply a status slightly inferior to that of a Dominion Representative?

A: At the moment, of course, he cannot represent a Dominion unit, as India is not a dominion. As I envisage the situation, the representative of India will be on the same footing. I cannot bind Washington accepting it. That must be a matter for the American government. I personally, should certainly suggest that they could give the same status to the representative of India as they would to the representative of Canada or other Dominions.

Q: What about the commercial safeguards?

A: So far as the commercial safeguards of Great Britain are concerned, they will not be a condition of any constitution at all. So far as the Indian people, Indian commercial people, are concerned, that is a matter for themselves.

Q: The other day you mentioned that the safeguards of British Members of the services would be taken over by the British Government—British members only or Indian members also?

A: It applied to anybody who has been in the service of the Crown and who is displaced as a result of the new arrangement, both in the army and in the services.

Q: Will it hold good in the case of covenanted service only or all, irrespective of whether they are officers or clerks, etc.?

A: I have not a so complete knowledge of the exact conditions of service, but the broad intention is that no individual will suffer who has been in the service of the Crown, if as a result of the compulsory changeover he loses his position.

Q: In clause (e) of the document it is said that the task of organizing to the full their military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India. Can the Indian members of the Council have the power to arm the population?

A: It will be for the Government of India as to how the activities of the Indian population are ordered. That is to say, they can decide whether there should be conscription, whether they should work in the factories, in the land, in the army. That is a function which every Government of every country is to perform as regards its own population. It has the right to decide how you are going to use the population for the defence of India.

Q: In the case of the non-acceding provinces, will they continue to be governed by the Government of India Act of 1935?

A: Whichever they elect to do. In the first instance, on the first day after the new Union comes into being, if they do not accede they will naturally maintain the situation in which they now are.

Q: The other day while you were explaining the term 'Indian peoples' you thought that India was inhabited by several races. Will you kindly give us at least the names of three or four races?

A: This is not a simple knowledge examination (Loud laughter).

Q: It is a very fundamental question. I suppose you are not confusing religion with race.

A: You know quite well the reason for my not answering such a question. If I should, I may omit a race, and I will be getting a thousand and one telegrams tomorrow. I do not confuse religion with race.

Q: If you are lucky enough to get this scheme accepted...

A: It is not a question of luck, it is a question of commonsense.

Q: Would you kindly consider staying on in India for three or four months to settle details?

A: I will certainly consider it. I am afraid the consideration is only likely to arrive at one conclusion and that is that I have promised to get back to England and to some extent my services are required there.

Q: Can you tell us clearly that you are going to give us 'freedom', freedom as understood by the people of the country, by the man-in-the street whose war effort is immediately required for the purposes you all have in view? What is the use of giving us a dominion status constitution of the Westminster variety which compels me to read Berriedale Keit. What is required is one simple word 'freedom', a simpler word which will infuse people with enthusiasm.

A: We used what we thought simple, the most conclusive phrase which was 'full self-government'. That seems to us to be the most expressive phrase that we can use. I am afraid it is not Berriedale Keith. If you ask him he will have considerable constitutional discussions with you as regards this. What we have said is full self-government. Now we have had to give that a definition which is understood not only in India but in the British House of Commons and in all the other dominions and other places in the world. We followed full self-government by a definition which we believed would convey the right meaning to all those other quarters.

There is no conceivable doubt about the situation that this allows complete and absolute self-determination and self-government for India, and I cannot imagine anything more which can be put into the two words,

Q: Why don't you use the word 'Swaraj'?

A: I know the use of the word pretty well. I don't know the language, but I have heard it many times over the last few years. I should say there is no difference between the two expressions. Ours is longer, yours is shorter, but they are the same.

Q: Can the Union join any contiguous foreign countries?

A: There is nothing to prevent (it). Canada (can) join the United States of America, if it wants, tomorrow.

Q: Can it?

A: Of course it can.

Q: In your broadcast yesterday you said that in case the scheme is not accepted, the responsibility shall be of the Indian leaders. What was the justification for that? The responsibility should be of Britain also. You have brought some proposals. The leaders were not consulted when the proposals were drafted.

A: We have been asked time and again by the Indian leaders to put forward some precise and clear scheme, method, by which self-government could be attained. We have been accused in the past of leaving it to the Indian leaders to decide, and, as a result, delaying the matter over years and years. We have now responded to the requests which we have received and we have made a precise and clear offer. The responsibility for acceptance or rejection of that offer does not rest with us but with the Indian leaders.

Q: In order to enable the Viceroy to call in the leaders to participate in the Government do you envisage or is there any possibility for the present Indian members of the Executive Council to go out?

A: If a new government is formed, it starts with the resignation of the existing executive as all cabinet re-constructions. You cannot reconstruct a cabinet until you have got the resignation of the old cabinet.

Q: Except the Commander-in-Chief?

A: Yes.

Q: Your address at the last press conference was so conclusive, so exhaustive and so helpful. Could we have an authorized version of the proceedings of that Conference?

A: I think it would be a bad precedent to set. I think it is wise to leave the matter to the press representatives themselves to take what notes they consider important.

Q: Then, are you satisfied with the reports that have so far appeared in the newspapers?

A: If I may say so, I am not only extremely satisfied but I am extremely grateful for the way in which the Press handled that long press conference. I realise that it was a strain to everybody who was there, but I think the high degree of accuracy of such reports as I had the opportunity to read is a great credit to the Press of India and I doubt whether any other press conference in any other country would have got so loyal and accurate a report.



B. THE BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

38. Telegram from Governor-General to Secretary of State on the Reactions of Political Leaders in India to Winston Churchill's Statement of Sending Sir Stafford Cripps to India, 12 March 1942
F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

Following is summary of immediate reactions of political leaders to Churchill's statement. Begins. (1) Nehru declined to make any comment, saying that the time to make comment would be later. (2) Maulana Azad recalled that Cripps had seen him when he visited India in 1940, and said he would welcome him as a friend when he visits India again. (3) Rajagopalachari expressed pleasure that British Govt. had at last realised gravity of situation and selected a good ambassador. Without knowing what Sir Stafford has got to present, he could say nothing more than what he had been saying from many platforms during last two months. (4) Saprú: 'On the whole I welcome Cripps' forthcoming visit and would not like to say a word which might prejudice his great mission in which I hope he will achieve as much success as he has in Russia. In view of increasing danger to India delay is regrettable, but it is as well that man of Sir Stafford's status independence of mind and democratic antecedents should visit India and see things with his own eyes.' (5) Jayakar: 'From what I have known of Sir Stafford in London, I am not without hope that he will do full justice to tremendous task he has undertaken.' (6) Jinnah: 'I cannot possibly give any opinion anticipating decision of Muslim League Working Committee, meeting of which is being called as soon as possible to consider situation and announcement'. (7) Savarkar: 'Hindu Mahasabha cannot attach much importance to endless discussions and conference even if conducted by member of British War Cabinet like Cripps unless and until we have definite proclamation bringing into operation immediately status of copartnership equal with Great Britain in Indo-British Commonwealth and representation of Hindu majority and Muslim minority which is perfectly democratic and in proportion to population. I welcome Cripps, but regret that scheme itself should have been still "a cat in the bag."'

39. Telegram from Governor-General to Secretary of State on the Reactions of Political Leaders, 13 March 1942
F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

Following is summary of further reactions of political leaders to Cripp's mission. (1) Gandhi declined to make any comment. (2) Vallabhbhai Patel: 'Cripps is coming at a time when sands are running out fast and it might be almost impossible for British to give us anything or for us to take anything. If British Government had listened when Cripps came to India two years ago things would have been quite different. Now Indians are being called upon to help when all these years out of suspicion they were kept unarmed and untrained in modern warfare.' (3) K. M. Munshi: 'It is wise step and if backed by bold and imaginative statesmanship on Great Britain's part would make for effective progress in successful mobilisation of India against invader.' (4) Sikander Hayat Khan: 'Procedure outlined indicates desire of British Government to promote agreement between major communities and interests; but it will take some time before Cripps arrives, and time factor is of extreme importance in view of situation on Eastern frontier. Cannot prominent leaders of various organizations get together and settle

more important principles leaving details to be worked out later? This will help Cripps's task and eliminate avoidable delay. I have recently sounded a few prominent leaders and found genuine desire for settlement on both sides, and differences in basic principles reduced to very narrow compass and capable of being composed without much difficulty. It would be far more graceful and patriotic to agree voluntarily between ourselves than wait for decision superimposed by British Government.'

40. Telegram from Governor-General to Secretary of State on the Reactions to Cripps Mission in the Central Legislative Assembly, 14 March 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

Following are points touching on Cripps' mission from speeches in Central Assembly during discussion on Finance Bill on February 12th, as reported in press. (1) Sardar Sant Singh. (Sikh): 'We are not concerned with motives of British Government in their action with regard to India at this late hour. Peril to Indians is greater than to handful of Englishmen of India. Bureaucracy has been guilty of many misdeeds and should hand over administration of country to representatives of people. Recalling experience of Montagu's visit, Indians must be careful about result of Cripps' visit.' (2) P. J. Griffiths. (European Group): 'Sant Singh's speech is particularly unfortunate, being permeated with suspicion and harking back to the past. It is more helpful to stop talking of points of difference and to talk of points of common agreement. Every member of House wants to see India united, self-governing and strong for war; this can only be brought about by avoiding recrimination and bickering. Cripps' record guarantees sincerity of British Government's intentions.' (3) Rao Sahib Sivaraj (Scheduled Castes): 'India has been grave of many reputations. I hope Cripps will succeed. When Cripps last came to India he was not recognised by British Parliament and was shadowed by special police. He forgot then that depressed classes existed; he saw a few Congressmen and went away. My community will do nothing to exaggerate our claims or overstate our case so as to obstruct any attainable settlement.'

41. Report of a Statement on Cripps Mission by Allah Baksh, Premier of Sind, 14 March 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

I exhort leaders of political and communal organisations to subordinate sectional differences in larger interests of motherland and cooperate with Cripps in shaping India's future constitution as equal partner in Commonwealth of free nations. Churchill's announcement will be cordially received by all men of goodwill as constructive step towards solution of India's long-standing problem. Decision to send Cripps kindles hope that vested interests and parties to disputes will alike give way to voice of reason, and that baffling problem will at last be handled in spirit of harmonious cooperation and mutual understanding. Personal discussions will afford effectual way of resolving deadlock. Cripps has given numerous proofs of earnest desire to help India attain freedom; it is gratifying to note that he is coming not only as ambassador but as plenipotentiary vested with full powers to act on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

42. Extract from a Secret Letter from the Central Intelligence Officer Containing M.A. Jinnah's Views on the Cripps Mission, 23 March 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

Jinnah also awaits Sir Stafford Cripps but has already expressed the Muslim fear that Sir Stafford may be partial to the Congress, being 'temperamentally' inclined in favour of that body. It would seem that Jinnah is now prepared to come to some understanding with the Congress, for the duration of the war, without prejudice to his Pakistan scheme. But he still adheres to his demand for a 50/50 representation at the Centre, which, unless toned down, precludes the hope of any settlement with the Hindus. In the event of Congress' acceptance of Sir Stafford's terms, Jinnah will have to take a decision. He may decide to come to terms with the Congress to avoid defections from the Muslim League, as there will be Muslims, like Nurie, who will be ready to leave the League, if they can secure power without its assistance. Sir Sikander probably visualises this eventuality and has advised Jinnah not to stretch points too far and to compromise on reasonable terms. The other alternative would be fight, which has been so often threatened, if a settlement is imposed without the League's consent.... All reasonable men hope and believe that the appeal made by the Rt. Hon. Srinivas Sastri to Indian leaders to 'forget their quarrels' will, at last take effect.

Recently there has been a revival of fears of communal riots in Bombay, Ahmedabad and other places in this Province. The reason is the reiteration of the Delhi Resolution of the All-India Muslim League from various League platforms in this Province and the hostile preparations that are being made both by the League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

An appeal has been made by the Muslim League for 10,000 volunteers for the Muslim National Guards and an Emergency Squad. About 320 Muslims have been enrolled for the National Guards, and about 200 for the Emergency Squad. A National Guard Week is being organised to encourage Muslims to enlist, but the response has not been very encouraging so far.

43. L.S. Amery's Letter to Lord Linlithgow on Prospects of the Success of the Proposals and Their Implications for the Pakistan Scheme, 24 March 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

So Cripps has duly arrived and made his first bow to the Press. His opening interview certainly seems to have gone off very well. What I shall be more anxious to know, if you have time to write, is how his opening talks have gone with you, with Wavell, with your Executive, and with Provincial Governors. A great deal to my mind turns on the extent to which the first two days will have given him your background and that of the administration before he talks to the politicians. As regards the latter, the atmosphere certainly seems to be as favourable as one could have hoped. It remains to be seen whether in face of the external danger any of the Congress leaders can be persuaded to realise that the half loaf, which is all that either we or the rest of India can give them, is better than no bread. Jinnah, I should have thought, will be content to realise that he has now got Pakistan in essence, whether as something substantive or as a bargaining point, though no doubt the purely provincial delimitation will want a good deal of adjustment so as to secure what he calls 'zones'. In that connection, by the way, I notice

that the use I made of the words 'area or region' in my simplified version of the proposed declaration—when it was still going to be a declaration—was intended in the broader sense of zones, and not, as I gather you took it, in the sense of some divisions even smaller than Provinces.

I was amused by your account of your talk with Coupland and I am sure that it will be a good thing for him to stay on for these talks before he goes home to write up his constitutional plan for the future. As regards that plan, the more I think of it the more probable it seems to me that in some form or other the Viceroy will have to remain, not merely as constitutional Governor-General, but as representative of broader imperial aspects of government, for a good long time to come, and to be equipped with the instruments of power required to carry out his functions. After all, supposing that Pakistan does come off, there will be possibly two Muslim areas, the whole of the States, Hindu British India (if that does not divide itself up!) and finally at least one important primitive hill tribe area such as that which Reid has very interestingly outlined in the memorandum which reached me by the last mail. It is obviously absurd to think that each of these is going to have its own air force and navy or even its own mechanised ground forces on any scale that is going to be of use for the defence of India. There will therefore have to be someone, in the absence of a central self-governing federal scheme, to take control of these matters, and that someone will have to have at any rate a certain number of cantonments, aerodromes and ports with probably a central reserve area of his own. He may not have a real Legislature, but only delegations from the different Legislatures, in other words, he may find himself presiding over the kind of inchoate system which as President Roosevelt has reminded Winston, prevailed in America between 1783 and the framing of the present American Constitution. So whatever else you do or agree to, you had better keep in mind the desirability of retaining Delhi and a considerable area around it as the ultimate federal territory of an eventually united India, and not let it pass into the hands of any one of the 'Dominions' that may temporarily emerge out of the first experiment in constitution framing. However, it is really rather absurd speculating about the constitutional future when there are so much more pressing immediate military problems before us.

I entirely agree with you that the kind of division of command contemplated by the Imperial Defence Committee in 1929 cannot apply in the India of today and that the defence of India must in effect be conducted by Commander-in-Chief as a member of the Government of India, ultimate difficulties being resolved at the highest level between Wavell and yourself on one side and the Cabinet and myself on the other. I do not see what other solution is workable, whether with your present Executive or with a possibly more political one resulting from Cripps' negotiations ...

44. Sir Stafford Cripps's Telegram to L.S. Amery
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 22, NMML.

26 March 1942

I saw Azad and Jinnah yesterday. Initial reactions seemed favourable though both reserved judgment till they had consulted their Working Committees.

Jinnah pointed out that closing words of paragraph (c) (i) were too indefinite and I therefore propose to revise wording before publication as follows. Omit all words after 'prepared' and

substitute 'to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down'.

45. An Intelligence Report of Muslim League Working Committee Meeting, 28 March 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

The Muslim League Working Committee met at midday on March 27th, 1942, in an atmosphere that was a good deal more friendly than usual. Jinnah was outwardly calm, but, from the fact that he had not shaved for two days, was probably under the influence of suppressed mental excitement. Twenty one members of the Committee were present, but few had anything useful to say. Jinnah read out the printed proposals received from Sir Stafford Cripps and then proceeded to announce what he considered to be the principles for consideration in order to determine their future action. Roughly, these principles were as follows:

- (a) Supposing that Congress accepts the proposals, should the League also accept and be yoked with Congress
- (b) If the Congress does not accept, should the League shoulder the whole burden?
- (c) If the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, should the proposals be accepted as they stand or should the League ask for further concessions?
- (d) Are there risks entailed in shouldering the whole burden and, if so, how should the League meet them?
- (e) Should acceptance be immediate or should there be some haggling for a while?

2. Khaliqzaman regarded the proposals as satisfactory but felt that the attitude of Congress was a factor which should most influence the League's decision to accept or not. He was also anxious to know whether the British would stay on in India or leave the Muslims to fight their own battles. This point was at once taken up by Jinnah who asked him if he thought the Muslims would get a better deal out of the Japanese—who would naturally side with the Hindus—than out of the British. Sir Sikander Hyat Khan expressed his opinion that for the first time in the history of the Muslims Britishers were taking them into confidence, however slightly, and that the Muslims should therefore respond and take all the opportunities offered of building up a powerful Muslim front with the collaboration of other Muslim powers. Jinnah was seen to nod approval to this and he remarked that he would be able to square the Mufti who was an old friend of his. Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan wanted to discuss details, but Jinnah insisted that only the main principles were in issue for the time being; he had an impression that details might be subject to change in the light of the attitude adopted by Congress and other interested parties.

3. Jinnah said details would be discussed at the evening session and that criticisms would be formulated for submission to Sir Stafford Cripps. He said it mattered little whether their requests for further concessions were accepted or not; the important thing was to gain time until something more definite was known of the Congress attitude.

4. Jinnah's mode plainly showed that he was prepared to accept the proposals in principle, and, while there was a certain amount of shallow criticism from one or two of the members present, there was no serious attempt to challenge his judgment.

5. The meeting adjourned after discussions lasting for two hours.

46. Another Intelligence Report of Muslim League Working Committee Meeting, 28 March 1942
F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

Further information regarding the Muslim League Working Committee's meetings show that at the evening session certain conclusions were reached:

- (1) The Cripps proposals are accepted in principle.
 - (2) Delaying tactics will be adopted until the Congress decision is known.
 - (3) Jinnah will see Sir Stafford today (Saturday) to make the following points:
 - (a) If Congress rejects the proposals, will the proposals even then be carried out with the help of the parties willing to work them, or will they be abandoned.
 - (b) The agency proposed for drawing up the future Constitution is unsatisfactory and should be modified.
 - (c) Under the existing Constitution, the Muslim position in majority Provinces is unsatisfactory and steps should be taken to improve it during the interim period.
- Jinnah is to see Cripps alone and not as the head of a League deputation.
2. At the League meeting Sir Sikander's proposals for a settlement with Congress received very short shrift and were brushed aside. He is now trying to bring Fazlul Huq back into the League fold. (This may prove rather difficult in practice: a fairly reliable source reports that Huq is presenting demands for joint electorates with reservation of seats and more power for autonomous Provinces.)
 3. It appears that the Princes and Jinnah are arriving at an arrangement whereby each will support the other's standpoint in the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps: the Princes will support the Pakistan idea and Jinnah will support the maintenance of the status quo in respect of the States.

47. Notes of a Meeting between Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Linlithgow to Discuss the Text of the Letters to Be Written by Cripps to Maulana Azad (with Annexures)
TOP, Vol. I, pp. 561-4.

30 March 1942

During the morning Sir Stafford Cripps, accompanied by Mr. Turnbull, came to show His Excellency the draft of a letter (marked P) which Sir Stafford was considering sending the President of the Congress, as he had been told that the question of the Defence portfolio was all-important with the Congress. His Excellency informed him that he could not accept the draft in this form and was bound to be careful even as regards a modified form in the absence of the Commander-in-Chief who had left Delhi.

In discussion His Excellency pointed out that a promise of particular responsibility for defence to one member could not be made in advance without knowing who the Members of the Cabinet were going to be, and that such a statement could not wisely be made to one party.

Sir Stafford modified the draft as at 'Q' referring to the Commander-in-Chief as 'a Member of the Executive Council'. His Excellency accepted this with the addition of the words 'in charge of Defence', and, before issue, a final important amendment was made so that the passage read 'as *the* Member of the Executive Council in charge of Defence'.

The letter is understood to have issued in this form, with a copy to the Muslim League and the Mahasabha.

Conflicting reports regarding Congress attitude were received during the day, one being to the effect that Gandhi was dead against it and had described the Declaration as a 'blank cheque on a crashing bank', and another being to the effect that Rajagopalachariar might not be able to make his full weight felt with Congress unless he secured the modification desired by him as regards Defence.

Further reports received were that Savarkar and some of the non-party people had been offended by being told by Sir Stafford that the Muslim League and the Congress were the people that really counted, and that the effect of this remark might be to drive them into the arms of the Congress.

A letter was received from Mr. Ogilvie in which he reported a conversation between himself and Master Tara Singh. Tara Singh had expressed the view that publication of the Declaration would cause great communal bitterness, and that Sikhs would accept nothing short of a separate partition of the Punjab for themselves. A copy of the letter is appended.

In the afternoon the 'final draft' of Sir Stafford Cripps broadcast was received and, with His Excellency's permission, an alteration was suggested in it to avoid the inference that if the Declaration failed people could still expect a change of Government in any case.

In the resultant broadcast the passage in question was left out altogether instead of being modified.

Annexure P

30 March 1942

My dear Maulana Azad,

I had a short talk with the Viceroy last night when he discussed with me his views as to the carrying out of clause (e) of the scheme.

(He is prepared to place an Indian Member in charge of that portion of the Defence activities which are laid down in the final form of the draft declaration as being the functions of the Government of India.) He hesitates to give this minister the name of Defence Minister since he does not wish to have any misunderstanding hereafter; but if it were to be clearly understood that the final definition of the division of responsibilities was as stated in paragraph (e) he would be prepared to consult with the Indian leaders on this basis, that is as to the creation of such a Ministry of Defence or of Defence Co-ordination.

I give you this information as you put the question to me when I saw you last.

() *But the C.-in-C. is in the charge of this as a member of the G. of I.*

L.

Annexure Q

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE, NEW DELHI

30 March 1942

My dear Maulana Saheb,

I had the opportunity of a short talk with H.E. the Viceroy last night during which he discussed with me his views as to the implementation of clause (e) of the draft Declaration.

It must be clearly understood that the final definition of the division of responsibilities between His Majesty's Government and the Government of India is as stated in paragraph (e) of the document. I propose to make the position as to this as clear as I can in my broadcast tonight.

The Viceroy would be prepared to consult with Indian leaders on this basis to see whether it were possible to designate an Indian to some office connected with the Government of India's Defence responsibilities without in any way impinging upon the functions and duties of the Commander-in-Chief either in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the armed forces in India or (as the Member of the Executive Council) in charge of Defence.

I give you this information as you put the question to me when last I had the pleasure of seeing you.

Yours v. sincerely,
STAFFORD CRIPPS

48. Letter from Ogilvie, Defence Department, Government of India, to Pinnell, PS to Viceroy, regarding His Meeting with Tara Singh and Latter's Suggestions regarding a Partition of Punjab
TOP, Vol. I, p. 564.

Yesterday night Master Tara Singh came to see me. He was extremely upset at the scheme propounded by Sir Stafford Cripps and gave it as his opinion that, so far as the Sikhs were concerned, it was more likely to cause a complete cessation of the war effort than to encourage them to do more.

He said that he considered that it was a great mistake to publish the announcement; that it would cause communal trouble all over India, and that the ultimate result might be a combination between the Congress, Hindu Mahasabha and Sikhs to oppose the war effort. He said that the only thing that would satisfy the Sikhs, if this scheme were to be implemented was that the Punjab should be divided and that the whole area South of Sutlej *plus* the districts of Lahore (*less* Lahore city), Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Kangra should be made into a separate province. He was, of course, convinced that the Punjab would never come in to a general union and he was equally convinced that the Sikhs would never tolerate Muhammadan rule, open or disguised. He expressed grave doubts as to the practical value of any treaty and said that the whole question of the treatment of minorities was much too vague and would not satisfy the Sikhs.

I believe that he was speaking for the others and that this view does probably represent what representative Sikhs are either already feeling or can readily be made to feel.



49. Notes of a Meeting between Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Linlithgow on How 'Indian Leaders Had Missed an Excellent Offer' and How Jawaharlal Nehru Was Supportive but Gandhi Was Adamant, but Congress Would Not Split (with an Annexure Containing Linlithgow's Views on the Matter)

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 141, NMML.

31 March 1942

Sir Stafford realised that he was finished, and had no feeling that there had been any lack of helpfulness so far as the Viceroy was concerned. He was still adamant on the question of defence. H.E. mentioned the question of transmitting information to Chungking, and said that he might be writing to Madame Chiang, and enquired whether he should express regrets that the Declaration had not been accepted, but add that all realise the difficulties of Indian leaders. Sir Stafford replied bluntly that he thought Indian leaders had missed an excellent offer, and if anything had to be said on the subject that should be made plain. He added that Nehru had been fighting hard for the scheme, but that Gandhi had made up his mind to prevent the organisation of India for war, and was prepared to use any means to thwart it. The Congress would not split. He intended to force the issue tonight.

Sir Stafford said that he would state in a press conference on Thursday that he was not going to discuss the reactions of parties or allocate the blame; but the general response was so poor that he would not be justified in recommending implementing H.M.G.'s plan, and that he was going back. H.E. suggested that Jinnah might pretend that this course was a little hard on him. Sir Stafford replied that Jinnah had not accepted the scheme and probably would not if the Congress did not. He had no intention of elevating him above his present position.

Sir Stafford then observed that if he went back with failure, the House of Commons would be certain to enquire whether he had asked Indian leaders what they would take. H.E. replied that if Sir Stafford wanted his personal views he would give them to him; but this looked like going outside the Cabinet brief. Sir Stafford said that he was thinking of getting some of the constructive leaders together among the Muslims, Congress, Mahasabha and Sikhs, and saying to them: 'This is the end for me; as regards India I am finished for the future. But before leaving you I am going to ask you whether there is any scheme on which you could all get together to fight the Japanese menace'. H.E. observed that it was most unlikely that they would produce any scheme, but that if Sir Stafford considered this course necessary to meet the criticism that he had failed to invite Indians to supply a constructive alternative he must of course follow it. He advised Sir Stafford that it would be futile, in his selection, to leave out the titular heads of the main organisations. If he tried to go behind their back to some more constructive Members, the former would condemn his results. On that basis it was evident whom he must see.

Sir Stafford mentioned that in conversation with Nehru, Nehru had made bitter complaints about the differentiation in comfort and facilities for European evacuees to Calcutta as compared with Indians. H.E. suggested that all these stories might not be gospel.

During the afternoon H.E. sent Sir Stafford a letter giving his considered views on the proposal at 'A' above—copy filed herewith (marked D).

Annexure D

31 March 1942

You have sought my views upon your proposal that in the event of you not being able to announce the acceptance of His Majesty's Government's proposals, you should invite a gathering of leaders of the principal parties to offer a constructive alternative upon which parties could agree and which they would be prepared to work.

I understand the importance of giving the parties an opportunity, if they so desire, to put forward their suggestions for an agreed and workable plan. But I would, I confess, have thought that the notes of your interviews with the various party representatives provide ample proof of your readiness to hear and consider difficulties and alternative proposals. Nor am I able to feel that any meeting of leaders is likely to provide you with as good a picture of their minds as you have gathered from your interviews, while it might possibly lead to much bickering and argument of a kind that might tend to increase bad feeling, particularly as regards communal matters.

If, however, you take the view that a talk to a meeting of that kind is worth while and ought to be undertaken, my advice would be that you should ask the recognized leaders of such parties or groups as you may desire to summon. I think that to select for invitation as representatives, persons other than those commonly regarded as the principal leaders of parties or groups, in the hope that those so chosen might prove more constructive than their 'betters', would upset the rejected panjandrums, and tend to make these hostile to any ideas or suggestions that might come out of the meeting.

50. Note of a Midnight Meeting between Sir Stafford Cripps and Lord Linlithgow on What Was Worrying the Congress More, the Defence Issue or the Right of Secession
TOP, Vol. I, p. 594.

31 March 1942

Sir Stafford observed that it was the defence issue that was really worrying Congress. H.E. expressed the view that what was hardest for them was not really the defence issue, but the right of secession, and Sir Stafford was half inclined to agree.

Sir Stafford said that he would be leaving on Sunday. He then expressed the wish that an occasion might be made for him on which to make a speech to the Army in India. It should be towards the end of this week, and it would be more effective if a reasonable number of troops were on parade and could go past him. He suggested that the Viceroy might be with him and take the salute. H.E. promised to consider this matter further.



51. L.S. Amery's Letter to Lord Linlithgow Commenting on Sir Stafford Cripps's Broadcast and Speculating about Congress Response
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

31 March 1942

I have just been reading Cripp's broadcast, which struck me as very good, and also his answers to the Press questions. I note that he has announced definitely that we mean to make no treaty reservations as regards British vested interests. I presume that he has only done that after consultation with you and presume also that it only means that the question of these interests is not included in the pre-constitution treaty. There is no reason why we should not make treaty arrangements afterwards with the Indian Government or Governments, as we do in the case of any Dominion or foreign country. I wonder, too, whether he discussed with you his rather elaborate figures on which he based the arrangements by which a Province can stand out, or his apparent assurance that in States where there are elected bodies they would be the basis of representation on the constituent body. However, all these are details as compared with the main question whether the scheme is accepted or not.

You may safely presume that Sir S. C. consulted me about nothing at any time.

L.

From today's papers it looks to me as if Congress, without turning it down directly on the issue of the constitutional future, will say that it will only play if the Executive is completely Indianised and Defence handed over to them. If they do that and the other parties agree, and especially if some fraction at any rate of Congress break away from the main body, I suppose you and Cripps will consider that there is enough agreement on which to go forward. What you will do if only Jinnah agrees and the Hindu parties all disagree is a more difficult question. My own feeling is that Gandhi will dislike the idea of being left out in the cold by agreement and will also be afraid, if Congress agrees, that the Mahasabha will gain too much ground at Congress' expense, and will therefore veto agreement.

If there is no agreement, then I presume you go back to very much what you were mediating as regards your own Executive, but that there will be no further talk of altering the Executive during the war. On the other hand, I assume that, agreement or no agreement, our post-war policy stands, though it may be open to us to drop it if the whole post-war situation turns out to be completely different....

52. Sir Stafford Cripps's Long Telegram to Winston Churchill on the Likely Response of the Major Actors, Responses to the War among the People of Various Provinces
TOP, Vol. I, pp. 600-2.

1 April 1942

From all appearances it seems certain that Congress will turn down the proposals. There are a multitude of currents and cross-currents but they are selecting the question of Defence as their main platform for opposition.

The Muslim League who are prepared to accept will no doubt if Congress refuse also find some reason for refusal as will all other sections of opinion.

There has been almost unanimous protest from representatives including the European community as to the complete retention of the existing control of Defence by His Majesty's Government. (I should however add that Viceroy doubts whether this is representative of attitude of Europeans in Bengal.) This protest arises partly from a misunderstanding of the position which I have tried to clarify in successive stages and partly because people feel that the maximum of appeal must be made to the Indian people by their leaders if they are to be galvanized to their Defence, and that unless those leaders can claim some control over their Defence of India they cannot make their appeal effective to the Indian people.

Except in the Punjab and North-West Frontier present situation as to morale amongst the Indian and in many cases the European population is deplorable. The anti-British feeling is running very strong and our prestige is lower than it has ever been owing to events in Burma and more particularly in Singapore. The stories circulating on all sides as to Malaya and Singapore convey an impression of incompetence which is indeed alarming.

Unrest is growing amongst the population, and unemployment is developing in certain centres. The food situation is causing disquiet and the refugee problem in view of the complaints of discrimination against the Indians, of which the administration is accused, and which I have asked the Viceroy to look into, is a source of serious intensification of anti-British feeling.

The outlook so far as the internal situation goes is exceedingly bad and if we cannot persuade the Indian leaders to come in now and help us we shall have to resort to suppression which may develop to such a scale that it may well get out of hand even though we use for this purpose a part of our available military resources.

I give you this picture so that you may judge as to the importance from a Defence point of view of getting the Indian leaders into the job of controlling, encouraging and leading the Indian people. This cannot be done under existing circumstances by any Britisher.

The present situation as to the Defence Minister is that the new words which were drafted by the Viceroy were put into paragraph (e) with the full consent of the Commander-in-Chief who consulted with the Viceroy upon this point without my being present.

An explanatory letter was sent to the main communities containing the following material paragraph: 'It must be clearly understood that the final definition of the division of responsibilities between His Majesty's Government and the Government of India is as stated in paragraph (e) of the document. The Viceroy would be prepared to consult with Indian leaders on this basis to see whether it were possible to designate an Indian to some office connected with the Government of India's defence responsibilities without in any way impinging upon the functions and duties of the Commander-in-Chief either in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the armed forces in India or as the Member of the Executive Council in charge of Defence'.

I have consequently addressed a letter (text in my next following telegram), suggesting interview of Congress leaders with Commander-in-Chief.

If some adjustment can be so arrived at will you give me full authority subject to agreement of Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy.

53. Intelligence Report of the Congress Working Committee Meeting, 2 April 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

The Congress Working Committee having now concluded the deliberations are drafting a statement which on being complete tomorrow will be sent to Sir Stafford Cripps and released to

the Press. The decision on the British Government's proposal is unanimous: Rajagopalachariar was won over to the majority opinion.

The Statement amounts to a rejection of the proposals: it maintains that in the absence of control of Defence by Indians the degree of Independence offered does not even approximate Dominion Status standard. Defence is the main stumbling block, for the following reasons (which have been commonly discussed in the Working Committee):

- (a) Hindus know that they will not be able to oppose the Japanese in the event of an invasion of India; moreover, the idea of taking life is inherently repugnant to them. Hence to make peace is the obvious solution; but they will be able to order the cease fire only if they control Defence.
- (b) With the full power of Government in their hands, Hindus would be able to prevent the fractioning of India by secession and Pakistan. But there can be no real power without control of the Army.

In the Working Committee meetings every member spoke. Rajagopalachariar was more than half inclined to accept the terms provided that he could have them modified in some respects he suggested, for instance, that there should be a joint British and Indian responsibility in the control of Defence. Bhulabhai Desai opposed the terms from the point of view of a constitutional lawyer; he dwelt on objections to the possibilities of secession from the Union, Pakistan, etc. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru both opposed the terms most vehemently. Azad said that with Defence in the hands of the British it would be impossible for him to go to the people and tell them to join the Army. Moreover, supposing that several thousand Indians with Indians at their head invaded this country how could the Congress ask Indians to oppose them when they were in fact coming only to drive out the British? If they (Congress) did so tell them they could not hope to carry the masses with them. (It is said in the Working Committee that there are 50,000 Indians—prisoners of war and others—now being trained in Malaya for use against the British in India). Nehru argued on much the same lines, his main theme being 'a national government without Defence is NOTHING'. Gandhi, Patel and Rajendra Prasad relied on the ahimsa argument: all wars and violence are sinful.

The Working Committee's attitude is entirely defeatist. They anticipate trouble as soon as the Japanese invade India—looting, communal disorders, etc. Even now, businesses are closing down while the going is good. Besides the contention cited above about the uselessness of opposition to Japan, a belief is also current that Britain is not going to win the war, and that even if she does there is no certainty that the British as victors will keep to their bargain. There is also a curious story in circulation among the members of the Working Committee that if Defence were to be vested in Indian hands, all the British Officers in the Indian Army would resign in a body. Where this came from is not certain, but it is associated without any given reason with Sir Stafford Cripps' name.

Tomorrow the Working Committee will meet again to finish the draft of their statement. Bhulabhai Desai is to give the Congress Assembly Party a complete picture of the reasons underlying the attitude adopted by Congress and their views about the future. There is now remarkable unanimity in all non-Muslim circles for rejection.

There is a general feeling in Congress circles that reactions throughout India to the Cripps mission will be strong, and there will be an appreciable worsening of feelings towards Britain. The Sikhs and the Hindus will be drawn more than ever towards Japan on account of the protection they seek against the Pakistan menace. Even now the Akalis and the Mahasabha

are talking among themselves of going over to Japan. If the Japanese reach India there is every chance that Tara Singh and Savarkar will lead their followers into the enemy's camp.

The report of the death of Subhas Bose has produced some marked and most significant results, clearly indicating a very sharp rise in sympathy for his attitude and aims; Gandhi's telegram of condolence to Bose's mother has acted powerfully in stirring up popular feeling and sympathy.

54. Another Intelligence Report of the Congress Working Committee Meeting, 3 April 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

The Working Committee did not meet today. Sir Stafford Cripps asked them not to complete their draft statement finally until Azad and Nehru had met him again. These two were to see him at 4.30 P.M. The Committee will meet tomorrow to consider any important modifications in the scheme that may result from this afternoon's meeting....

2. The Congress Assembly Party held a meeting this afternoon before dispersing. Rajagopalachariar and G.B. Pant were also present. The former addressing the meeting said that now was the time to take up the defence of India seriously and he condemned the attitude of those who looked towards Japan for salvation. It was a mistake of the sort which Indians had made when the British first came to this country and the result was over 100 years of subjection. There is now, he said, an opportunity to defend our country and we should take it; we must tell the people that now is the time to die in order that the nation may live. He said that he had pressed the Working Committee to accept his point of view but that when he found that this was of no avail, he gave way in order that the Committee's decision might be reported as unanimous.

3. G.B. Pant expressing his own views on the settlement proposals referred to the Defence question. He thought personally that if a settlement were to be effected, he would not be pleased as their obligation to defend the country would prove to be a very prickly problem; so if negotiations were to break down, he would not be sorry.

4. Bhulabhai Desai thinks that Nehru is perturbed over the meaning of the term Dominion Status in case it indicates some diminution of real power. He also remarked that although he was not permitted to say what took place at the Working Committee meetings, he had hopes that they would soon be meeting again 'in happier circumstances'.

5. While it is said in certain quarters that Sir Stafford Cripps is proposed to make certain modifications in the matter of Defence and that hopes of a settlement have therefore revived, the general feeling among ordinary people is that there will be no settlement. This feeling is in some measure due to a rather curious psychological fact; the wording of terms of the proposals is held to be too bald and blunt—it contains no stirring passages such as adorned the proclamation of 1858—and has failed to catch the popular imagination.

Sir Sikandar Hyat-Khan has been specially recalled to Delhi (by whom it is not certain) as in the event of Congress accepting revised terms, Jinnah would probably need to be persuaded.

(This report comes from a source regarded hitherto as entirely reliable.)



55. Letter from R. Lumley, Governor, Bombay, to Lord Linlithgow on the Implications of Congress Rejection of the Proposals
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 56, NMML.

3 April 1942

Political Reactions. Sir Stafford Cripps' mission, and the publication of the War Cabinet's declaration, have entirely monopolized public attention. Before Sir Stafford Cripps arrived, Congress here were reported to be very optimistic, while the Muslims were obviously suspicious. When the terms of the offer were made public, most communities obviously endeavoured to mark time to see what their leaders would say; but I have little doubt that the completeness and the generosity of the terms made a marked impression, and that the private view of a great many people, especially Hindus, was that they could not see how such terms could be rejected. Consequently, when it became apparent that Congress were likely to reject the proposals, there was marked depression. It has been relieved, for the moment, by the news that Sir Stafford Cripps has postponed his departure and that the discussions will continue. What the effect will be if the discussions finally break down, is difficult to foresee. I still, however, believe that the making of the offer, even if it is rejected, will have been all to the good. Congress, no doubt, will have sufficient hold over the nationalist Press to confuse the issue and persuade great masses of unthinking followers that it is the British Government again, which is responsible for the failure of this proposal: but the very-deep impression which was made when the proposals were first published, and the important reactions in the American Press, must have their effect, and I think there must be a strong undercurrent which believes that Congress will have missed a great opportunity.

The Muslims have remained so quiet, up to now, that there is practically no evidence, in Bombay, of the effect of the proposals on them, but I assume that reports in the Press are correct, and that Muslim leadership is fairly well satisfied with them. If that is so, it will be a solid advantage, whatever the ultimate reactions may be. I might mention here, in view of the controversy which has arisen in the House of Commons about the Momins, that a meeting of some 6,000 Muslims, at which a large number of Momins were present, was recently held in Bombay, which condemned unanimously the action of certain Momins in sending telegrams to the Secretary of State suggesting that Momins were supporters of Congress and affirmed unanimously that they were solidly behind the Muslim League.

One reaction amongst Parsees is worth reporting. Sir Cowasji Jehangir tells me that amongst middle-class Parsees there is a feeling that it would be better to be ruled by the Japanese than to have India dominated by the Congress. Amongst Parsees, bitterness about the Congress regime still prevails. The same is, I should say, true of Dr. Ambedkar's followers.

Communal Feeling—Prior to the arrival of Sir Stafford Cripps, a certain amount of tension was evident arising from the fear of Muslims that they might be let down. There were rumours, both in Ahmedabad and Bombay, that serious communal rioting had broken out in the other city. Fortunately these rumours were not true, but the District Magistrate in Ahmedabad had taken certain precautions. There have been three minor clashes in different parts of the Province, which reveal the inflammable nature of the position. With the hot weather coming, and with the possibility that the rejection of the Cripps proposals may lead to political antagonism, it seems to be by no means unlikely that communal trouble will arise.

56. L.S. Amery's Letter to Lord Linlithgow (with Linlithgow's Comments in the Margins) Discussing the CWC's Resolution and Employing Strong Language to Describe the Resolution, 3 April 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

I have just seen Stafford Cripps' summary of the Congress Working Committee's Resolution. It is certainly difficult to imagine a more purely negative document and I am afraid it looks as if Gandhi had once again persuaded them that wrecking is the best policy. I am not sure that these people really want responsibility, and if we offered them the moon they would probably reject it because of the wrinkles on its surface. Even they must know quite well that if they reject the future policy, and there is no agreement upon that, there obviously can be no agreement now as to the allocation of power between the various elements of the 'Indian people'. They must know equally well that they are quite incapable of taking on the whole defence problem or of 'galvanizing the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion'. All this is bunk for external consumption, material for proving us in the wrong if we refuse to hand the whole show over to them.

Give me a single 1st rate British victory over the Japs. and I will get you a settlement.

L.

2. All the same, I am glad that Cripps has not broken off at once, but is prepared to discuss the defence question with their representatives and Wavell. On merits I have, as you know, always had a leaning towards the division of defence between the administrative and the operational side and giving the former to an Indian. That is the current division of functions in all the continental armies, and indeed very largely here today, with Winston as Defence Minister and the immediate head of the three Chiefs of Staff. Anyhow, something of that sort is a compromise worth accepting, if it means a real agreement and whole-hearted support, and worth being willing to accept, if only to show ourselves as reasonable compared with Congress intransigence.

3. I must say that the more I look at the Resolution the more doubtful I am whether people of that type would ever run straight, even if they could be brought for the moment to agree. They would be quite capable, not only of making endless difficulties for Wavell, but even of trying to negotiate a separate peace with Japan.

They could never run straight. One will have to plough through the old gang down to better and younger stuff.

L.

4. The Cabinet has never yet considered what precisely we are to do if negotiations with Congress break down. Is it possible for you to carry out some further expansion of your Executive on the non-official side with the support of the Muslim League and some other minor parties? This time you won't have even the Mahasabha, who were prepared to play in 1940, or, apparently, Ambedkar. However, his criticism of the scheme may only be meant to register a claim and may not preclude his coming in to help.

5. As for the post-war side of the scheme, I suppose we stand by it in any case. Public opinion may get more used to it and realise that it is up to Indians themselves to prevent Pakistan by mutual concessions, while such a problem as

I am myself now quite sure that self-government is incompatible with unity.

L.

that of the Sikhs may have to be dealt with by boundary readjustment or by autonomy within autonomy.

6. Meanwhile, my inclination would be to sum up to the situation by saying that we are likely to have improved our position in the outside world, but for the time being at any rate, made it worse in India than if we had done nothing and stood pat, as you and I were prepared to do at the end of last year. As against that must be set the fact there is really no other solution consistent with the principles of self-government, and that the sooner Indians begin to face up to that the better.

*I agree: worse on the short view,
but better on the long—in India.*

L.

7. What I didn't like about Cripps' telegram on the defence question was the picture he drew of the gravity of the present position and of the terrible results of a breakdown in the negotiations. I have telegraphed asking you for your personal view and hope it may confirm my own, which is that, though the situation has many elements of weakness, we are not on the verge of a breakdown of government, and that the failure of the negotiations may leave a great many people relieved at heart. I cannot see Congress going into direct antagonism or even joining the Japanese because they have once more rejected a good offer.

8. I am not sure that it is not a case of the Sibylline Books, and that if Congress fails this time it may be the end, for many long years, of any constitutional progress in India. The tide in the world outside is all against democracy and self-government and while we are rightly fighting and hope to win the battle against the excesses of the world revolution, just as we fought and won the battle against the excesses of the French Revolution, yet many of the underlying ideas of the reaction against Parliamentary Democracy may well dominate the coming generation. If so, and with an India left exhausted and demoralized after the war, the whole trend of opinion here and in India may move away from the democratic forms we have envisaged in the past, even if there may be increasing concessions to Indian independence of control from here.

9. I must say I have been rather annoyed by Cripps' telegram about our failure to help in the matter of fire-fighting. I won't go into details, as I have explained the situation in my telegrams. Where I have much sympathy with you is in your appeal on the subject of your airborne troops. It has been a hopeless job trying to get any sort of decision one way or the other as between Air Ministry and War Office, but we are now trying again and only hope that somehow Winston can be induced to intervene....

Not with me, I should hope.

L.

10. When some one asked Napoleon what the world would say when he died, he said 'Ouf!' I expect you will be saying 'Ouf!' when the present hectic affair is over, and you get—I hope—a breathing space.

*What I said was: 'Goodbye
Mr. Cripps'.*

L.

57. Sir Stafford Cripps's Long Telegram to Winston Churchill on Different Strands within Congress and the Scope of Accommodating Other Non-Congress Actors, 4 April 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 636–9.

1. The time has now arrived when a final decision must be arrived at as to how far we are prepared to go on the chance of getting a settlement. My best estimate of the situation is as follows:

2. The Muslim League are satisfied and prepared to accept the scheme as it stands.

3. Congress reaction you know from my telegram No. 875-S of 2nd April. According to the best information I can get as to the internal stresses there are at least three sections of opinion. The Gandhi wing of non-violence who are against the scheme altogether. They are indifferent as to what happens in the war and regard Great Britain as defeated and unimportant so far as the future of India is concerned. They are definitely a minority. The remainder are all in favour of fighting the Japanese and would participate in the war given conditions which in their view could make their participation effective.

4. This remainder falls into two main groups—those who consider the defects (non-accession and Indian States representation) as fatal quite apart from the defence question and those who would unwillingly swallow the rest of the scheme if they were satisfied on defence.

5. It is impossible to estimate the relative strength of the two groups, but the latter might if satisfied be able to swing the Working Committee particularly if the offer on defence were sufficiently favourable to make any refusal on that ground look ridiculous.

6. Nothing can be done to meet Congress on the points other than defence. The first point upon 'independence' is not a vital one. The second as to the Indian States cannot be met without upsetting seriously the States Rulers which I could not recommend at this stage. The third on non-accession is vital to get the Muslim League in and any change in that now would only result in losing their support and we should be no better off.

7. The only point therefore for negotiation is the content of clause (e) which as you know was purposely left vague apart from the general principle of the retention of defence.

8. I must make it clear that so far as this point is concerned, the demand for transfer of responsibility has come from all sides except the Muslim League and the Sikhs. Many Muslims have demanded it individually, e.g., Prime Minister, Bengal. The general trend of the Press is that it is a universal demand and if Congress refuse on this point whatever their actual views may be all other communities including the Muslim League will probably point to it as a reason for refusal.

9. I must point out that if Congress do not accept no one will dare to state that they will accept the scheme. I should expect it to be turned down by all sections including Muslim League although they have in fact passed unanimous resolution accepting it in their Working Committee.

10. In the event of acceptance by Congress I am informed from a good source that the non-violent group will probably retire from all participation in the Working Committee during the war and will leave the other leaders (Maulana Azad, Nehru and Rajagopalachari) to carry on.

11. So far as these three are concerned and the Working Committee under their control, I am satisfied that if once they come in they will go all out to maximise Indian resistance to Japan and will fight with courage and determination to galvanise the Indian people to action. They have told me that there would be no question whatever of any separate peace and I am certain this can be relied upon.

12. Estimates will differ as to how far their coming in will or can help in the actual prosecution of the war.

The two main factors in my view are—first that they will be able to assist greatly in preventing panic and maintaining morale amongst the great masses of the civilian population and organizing them in civil defence of all kinds, and second the Muslims also will come in and throw their weight into the war.

13. In addition I think the general psychological effect on the allied cause will be good especially in all eastern theatres of war including the near and Middle East.

14. There will of course be risks of differences between His Majesty's Government and the Indian Government, but these seem to me to be unimportant in view of the major considerations stated in paragraphs 12 and 13.

15. If they do not accept, then the situation will in my view become very difficult as we shall be attempting to carry on the war in at best a neutral atmosphere and at worst a hostile one. A great deal of suppression will be necessary and this will again exacerbate nationalist feeling and no section of the people will be prepared to come out in open support of His Majesty's Government.

16. It is in these circumstances that we must decide how far we can go with safety in giving to an Indian Minister control of defence.

17. So far as the functions of the Commander-in-Chief as such are concerned, there can be no question whatever as to taking any existing power away from the Commander-in-Chief.

18. It is only in his capacity as Defence Minister that any question can arise. Under the new arrangement whereby the Executive Council will approximate to a Cabinet presumably any question coming within the competence of the Government of India as defined in the amended clause (e) will be for decision by the Government of India as a whole and not by any particular Minister.

19. This will relate to all questions of policy as distinct from administration.

20. There seem to be three possible courses open:

- (a) To stand upon the present position that nothing further can be done by way of compromise.
- (b) To take the risks entailed and to hand over the Defence Ministry to an Indian, subject to a convention in writing that the Defence Minister will not in any matter affecting the prosecution of the war act contrary to the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government and communicated through the Commander-in-Chief.
- (c) To create some new office for an Indian Minister connected with Defence and to hand over to him any functions of the Defence Ministry which the Commander-in-Chief considers can be so handed over safely and practically.

21. As to (a) above, I consider this would be a fatal policy for two reasons. First it makes failure inevitable, and second it leaves His Majesty's Government open to the criticism that we were merely stubborn when some small concession might have made all the difference.

22. I should personally prefer to offer (b) as this would I think have the best chance of acceptance. But in view of the immediate dangers and the Commander-in-Chief's view of the confusion that might be caused I cannot press it as strongly as otherwise I would.

23. As to (c), I doubt very much that there is any chance of acceptance. But nevertheless, if you decide that you cannot act in accordance with paragraph, 22, then I think this should be tried on the off chance of acceptance and in any event so as to show we have done our utmost to reach an accommodation.

24. In this regard after discussion I think the best that could be done to give effect to paragraph 20 (c) would be to (a) make the Commander-in Chief War Member instead of Defence Member and turn the Defence Department into the War Department; (b) set up a Defence Co-ordination Department to take on the duties of the present Defence Co-ordination Section and certain things now done by the Defence Department, e.g., Public Relations and any other functions agreed to by the Commander-in-Chief.

25. If you approve principle of (c) I can work out details of actual wording of offer with Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy.

26. There is a small chance of acceptance as regards paragraph 20 (c) and a better chance as regards paragraph 20 (b). If there is acceptance by Congress, I anticipate the Muslim League will come in and this will be a large enough measure of acceptance to proceed with the scheme. Other bodies too will probably come in so as not to lose the chance of seats in the new Government.

27. In the event of acceptance, there will of course be difficulties as to apportionment of seats when the Viceroy comes to form his new Government and I would propose in that event to stay till the new Government is formed.

28. It is a matter of urgency to decide as to how we propose to proceed and I ask you to consider the question most urgently as I am convinced we must make some offer to meet the situation.

29. I am asking Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief to telegraph their own comments separately and urgently.

30. When you come to a decision please telegraph most immediate the words 'your paragraph 20 (b) approved' or 'your paragraph 20 (c) approved' as case make be and any comments by separate immediately following telegram.

31. I have provisionally promised congress my final answer after consulting your by Tuesday morning.

58. Secret Intelligence Report on Responses within Congress to Cripps Proposals, 5 April 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

There are indications that Congress is now inclined to come to terms. They realise among other things that in case of invasion internal conditions will be very bad and the country will be faced with ruin.

2. The change in outlook has been largely brought about by Rajagopalachariar's realistic pleading. Nehru is among those who have now begun to favour acceptance. There are still, however, points on which they would like to see further concession. Control of Defence is the main thing, but apart from that they would like to see the question of secession from the Union left over for decision by a fully empowered Constituent Assembly and not be dealt with in advance as a part of the present settlement. Furthermore, they would like a redistribution of provincial areas prior to the elections on the present franchise; the main items in this connexion include making the Ravi River the southern boundary of the Punjab and combining the excluded territory with the Meerut Division and neighbouring districts as a separate province. There is also an idea for dividing Bengal into East and West fractions representing Muslim and Hindu zones, but if the Defence demand is conceded, Congress would perhaps waive the other points: the secession item is not unanimously supported as many regard secession as a perfectly democratic solution. Comment in Congress circles suggests that joint responsibility for Defence plus some working arrangement with the Commander-in-Chief would probably be acceptable.

The results of the conversation between General Wavell and Abul Kalam Azad and Nehru are not yet known.

(The above information comes from a source hitherto regarded as reliable.)

Later information from an independent source suggests that Rajagopalachariar, Nehru and others of the Working Committee are anxious for a settlement, provided that they can get enough satisfaction out of General Wavell, and there is an atmosphere of subdued optimism among Delhi journalists. It was said, however, that Gandhi is not satisfied with the attitude of the Working Committee, although no reasons for his dissatisfaction are given.

59. Extract from the Fortnightly Note from the Central Intelligence of
UP on Reactions to Cripps Proposals in UP, 6 April 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

The attention of all political parties during the fortnight has been focused on Sir Stafford Cripps' visit to India. His arrival was generally welcomed and all parties expressed a hope that his proposals would pave the way for an end to the present political deadlock. Now that the proposals are known, they have come in for considerable criticism from almost all circles and no party, at present, appears to be willing to discuss the problem in a spirit of compromise. Some talks have been heard to the effect that many Congress leaders have little faith in Britain's ability to stave off an invasion of India and that they are therefore anxious to remain in a position which will enable them to negotiate with the Japanese should this occur. One report was also received that Jinnah also wished to remain free to negotiate with Japan, if necessary.

The chief Congress criticism is in connexion with the insistence that Defence must remain Britain's responsibility. In fact, this clause appears to be unacceptable to leaders of almost all parties including Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Hindu Mahasabha. The option to provinces to decide for themselves whether they should join the Union also does not meet with the approval of Congress. A letter, apparently written by Acharya Kripalani to a Congress worker in Fyzabad soon after the preliminary meeting of the Working Committee which was held at Wardha makes interesting reading. He said that 'this time our meeting lasted for four days. There was nothing to decide. We shall soon be called again after the President has met Cripps and finds out what he has to offer. We cannot think of advising the countrymen to engage in butchery. If they decide to do so on getting favourable terms, we are out of it. So our side is not keen on meeting and considering the proposals. But, I think we shall have to meet all the same.' This seems to indicate that Gandhi and his staunchest non-violent followers wish to remain neutral whatever proposals the British Government may agree to. The 'National Herald', as might be expected, is not prepared to give the British Government credit for any unselfish motives in connexion with the proposals.

The Congress' reply to the proposals is due today, but it is generally expected that the Working Committee will reject the scheme in its present form and seek modification of some of the provisions so as to make it acceptable to them.

The Hindu Mahasabha have rejected the proposals which they allege concede what actually amounts to Pakistan. Non-Party members also strongly criticise the clause regarding Defence. The 'Leader' of Allahabad criticises the scheme of the provision regarding self-determination of provinces and reserves final opinion until the reactions of various political parties are known. It characterises the proposals as vague and halting and refers to the scheme as 'good in parts but positively bad in others'.

The proposals appear on the whole to have been well received in Muslim League circles, although the Working Committee's decision has not yet been announced. The clause giving the provinces a choice to join the Union is interpreted as a partial recognition of the Pakistan Scheme.

60. Extract from the Review of Political Situation from the Central Intelligence of CP on Responses to Cripps Proposals, 6 April 1942
F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

The main interest of the public has been focused on the negotiations which are now being carried on in Delhi by Sir Stafford Cripps. The majority of the people had great hopes of a successful outcome when his mission was first announced, although a smaller section saw nothing in it but further delay, but his proposals as now published have so far received little but adverse criticism, on the main grounds of the partition of India, of defence not being in Indian hands during the period of the war, and of State representation on the constitution-making body. Muslim opinion, expressed in private, has alone welcomed the proposals as satisfying the Muslim claim to 'Pakistan'. On this subject of a political settlement, there is thus pessimism, although a faint hope exists that in spite of its apparent drawbacks the scheme will be accepted by Congress.

61. Secret Intelligence Report on Responses to Cripps Proposals from Different Political Parties, 7 April 1942
F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

Congress having sent their further statement to Sir Stafford Cripps after Saturday's interview with General Wavell are now awaiting H.M.G.'s reply through the former. The general feeling in Congress is that H.M.G., will not go as far as Congress wish them to go in the matter of Defence.

Meanwhile the position outside Congress reveals a gathering opposition—Sikhs, Hindu Mahasabha and Scheduled Castes are all vocal; even the Muslim League is not too well pleased. Hindus and Sikhs are bitter because they hold that Pakistan had been conceded; the Muslim League because it is sure that the supposed concession is unreal. Not a single political organisation (except perhaps the Sapru group) is now supporting the proposals. The position is becoming all the more difficult on account of mounting communal bitterness. Congress leaders are depressed because if they accept the proposals, they will also assume heavy responsibilities which they know they will not be able satisfactorily to discharge. On the other hand, if they reject the terms, they feel they will be at liberty to continue agitation without incurring any of the burden of responsibility.



62. A Long Press Conference by L.S. Amery in London Discussing the Political Situation in India since the August Declaration, Comparing India with Other Colonies, Answering Questions, 7 April 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 668–82.

MINISTER OF INFORMATION: Gentlemen, the Secretary of State of India has very kindly come here today to give you some background on the present position of the negotiations in India. After he has made his statement he tells me he will be very glad to answer questions.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (hereafter SOS): Gentlemen, I thought it was a happy idea of Mr. Bracken's that we should be meet at this very critical moment in the development of the Indian negotiations. Not from the point of view of giving you any news because that can only come from India and I can only hope it may be good news because that can only come from India and I can only hope it may be good news, but to give you the general background of the Government's point of view and the genesis of our whole policy and, in the light of that background the motives and currents which will either lead to agreement or, as I am rather afraid, may lead to disagreement. As you will remember it is now something like twenty months ago that the Government issued what is known as the August 1940 Declaration. A very far-reaching Declaration as a matter of fact, which promised India a full Dominion status, full and equal partnership with ourselves, as soon after the war as a constitution-making body agreed upon by Indians could meet and frame their own Constitution, subject only to two main conditions:

Provision for the due fulfilment of such obligations of ours as have arisen from our long connection with India, and subject also to the fact that the new Constitution must be by agreement and not by coercion of any important element of India's nation life.

I do not think the fullness of that Declaration was ever realised and indeed it may have suffered by a certain lack of precision which laid it open at once to the extremely suspicious Indian mind. The feeling was that we had not given sufficient precision as to what was meant by 'equal partnership with ourselves'; that we had not indicated what we meant by obligations and that we had at the back of our minds the idea of using those obligations as a lever for in effect depriving them of full Dominion status, and yet again, and this was perhaps the strongest suspicion of all, though entirely unwarranted, that our insistence upon agreement was simply an excuse for postponing any sort of decision; that we did it with our tongue in our cheek knowing that Indians would not agree and indeed in the course of some eighteen months no attempt at arriving at agreement was made. We felt it was essential from the point of view of the outside world and of India that we should set those suspicions or misunderstandings at rest and the main and primary object of proposed Declaration was to remove all possible vestige of those suspicions. It made clear in the Preamble that there was no kind of qualification of limitation upon Dominion status; that in every respect India as soon as she had framed her own Constitution was to be put on an equality with ourselves. It even made it clear in later paragraph that nothing in any treaty between the constitution-making body and ourselves for the fulfilment of past obligations or for military assistance, for instance, if India asked for it, should be so framed as to preclude India from leaving the British Commonwealth. The thing could not be more far-reaching or more precise than that. In the same way the fulfilment of obligations, the clearing up of all matters incidental to the complete transfer of responsibility was made not as a unilateral Declaration by the British Government, but to conserve and emphasise

equality of status in treaty form in a treaty to be agreed with the constitution-making body, and no doubt negotiated concurrently with the framing of the Constitution, so that there could be no question of our holding up India's freedom by long bargaining about points of that sort.

Then as to the question of delay, we had already made it clear that as soon as might be after the war, if Indians agreed, they should set up their constitution-making body, but again to show that we meant business we have indicated the constitution-making body which, in default of prior agreement among Indians themselves, we propose to set up at once after the cessation of hostilities; not after the technical end of the war, which might be considerably later, but after the cessation of hostilities, but only, and this is the answer to any criticism of that particular constitution-making body, this is our suggestion of what we will do if they cannot agree upon a better one. We are not compelling India to adopt this particular form of constitution-making body, but basing it as we do on the elected representatives, the Lower Houses of Provincial Assemblies, we do at any rate indicate that we want a democratic body insofar as British India is concerned. Insofar as the States come into it, they are, subject to certain limitations, entirely self-governing and independent. They are vitally affected by what happens in India, but it would be contrary to all principles of the relations between States and communities if we were from the outside to insist that their representation was to be in any other form than the existing Government of those States choose. They may not be democratic States, but, on the principle of the Atlantic Charter, we do not propose to enforce a Constitution upon other countries, nor could we enforce upon the Indian States any other form of internal Constitution or of representation of their Constitution than they themselves decide upon.

Lastly, and this is perhaps the most important point, we wish to make clear that our insistence upon agreement does not mean delay by the provision which allows for the non-adhesion of provinces which dissent from the constitution framed by ourselves [*sic*]. That is really in one sense an inversion of the true position, which is that we say to hold you up indefinitely because certain parts of India do not like your constitution; you are entitled to go ahead and frame your Union as, for instance, in the case of every Dominion a similar Federation or Union took place in the first instance of those who were willing to join. If I may remind you, the Federation of Canada began with Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Q.: But they were separate Colonies, were they not?

SOS: They were separate Colonies.

Q.: Is that comparable at all?

SOS: Yes, it is, because when you remove the bureaucratic element, you have to have some basis upon which people come together when you have elements as different as those.

Q.: I am humbly suggesting that they are altogether different cases. It is not a question of bringing people together, it is a question of an existing State, British India, and not of separate Colonies.

SOS: They are separate over a very wide field of government. The question is whether the common element of government which is to be transferred from His Majesty's Government to a new body is to be based on agreement or not.

Q.: I am only humbly suggesting that it is not comparable with Australia, Canada, or South Africa, where there was no common element of government at all except the British Crown.

SOS: I do not admit that at all. On the contrary, if you look back to the condition of the Canadian Colonies in the years immediately before Federation, practically all those matter

which today are governed in India by the Central Government were still under the control of the Imperial Government. The Canadian Colonies enjoyed self-government, but foreign policy and defence were still in the main under the control of His Majesty's Government. If you are to get any free Constitution in India it must be on the basis of the coming together of the main elements that make up India, and in default of devising new elements, which is rather what Mr. Jinnah suggested, the Province, which has a considerable national life of its own, is the only basis. I wonder if you read a very interesting speech made not many months ago by [the] Prime Minister of the Punjab, in which he laid down various points of view as to what an Indian Constitution might be and ended by saying quite clearly 'Whatever it is, it is a question of hands off the Punjab'. From our point of view, the essential for progress, as in the Dominions, and I repeat this, lay in those parts of India that wished to go ahead and form a Constitution for themselves not to be held up indefinitely by the objections of others. That does not mean that in any sense we are anxious to break up that unity of India which we for the first time in history brought about and without which there will be many economic and political difficulties facing the India of the future, but if India is to be freely governed it must be governed by consent and if we were to agree to a majority Constitution for India from which certain important Provinces at once dissented and declared themselves hostile the whole scheme would break down from the beginning, and therefore we believe that the first approach to unity in India is going to lie in Indians settling this question for themselves on the basis of being free to join or not to join. The whole difficulty of the position hitherto has been that instead of approaching it objectively, each section, and more particularly Congress, has always hoped that by using its pull here, in Parliament, in America and elsewhere, it would get us to set up a Constitution which favoured its point of view and then see that Constitution through with the help of British bayonets. From now onwards, whether these present negotiations succeed or fail, as regards immediate cooperation, it is perfectly clear to Congress and to other elements in India that they can only achieve their end and come together by dealing with each other and that it is no use trying to override other sections in India by appealing to us or putting pressure upon us. Anyhow, from our point of view, after very much consideration, we felt that this permission to stand out was the only way in which progress could be made with an Indian Constitution framed by Indians for themselves without involving the majority coercion of elements which are no more susceptible of being treated as minorities than the different nations or elements in Europe are. How fairly we have struck the balance in this matter is perhaps shown by the fact that Mr. Jinnah is very far from satisfied that this is going to give him his Pakistan. He is already frightened that the minority influence in the pre-dominantly Moslem Provinces will be so effective and influential as to prevent the Provinces voting themselves out. I think that alone indicates how near we have come to striking a reasonable and fair balance in this matter. We believe that our proposals are as generous, as fair between the different elements, and as practicable as any proposals that could be devised. Anyhow what we hoped was that in the light of those proposals, in the better atmosphere created, Indian political leaders would both support the British Government war effort and would be less concerned than they have been with manoeuvring for position against each other. From that point of view our invitation to them has been to participate immediately and effectively in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. By that was meant that they should be invited to occupy posts on the Viceroy's Executive which is, of course, a corporate body and takes its decisions, as the Cabinet does, collectively, though it is subject to the overriding authority of

Parliament here and of the Viceroy in such matters affecting the vital interests of India as he may decide upon. We hoped that, if they cooperated, we would give them representation on the War Cabinet here on the same footing as the representative of Australia, or on such a body as the Pacific War council, and at the Peace Conference. In other words, that subject to the existing Constitution of India, they would be given the very widest opportunity of effectively cooperating and participating in the decisions of the Government of India. What was never contemplated and could not be carried out would be an immediate change in the fundamental Constitution of India at this moment with the enemy at the gates. After all a Government must be responsible to some organised scheme of Government. At present the ultimate responsibility for the Government of India lies in Parliament, full discussion in Parliament, and the responsibility of Ministers and the Secretary of State to Parliament and of the Government of India on ultimate issues, major issues, to the Secretary of State. Similarly, as soon as an Indian Constitution has been agreed, the Government of India of that day will be responsible to their Constitution, to its Legislature, within the terms of the Constitution. When people talk of setting up at this moment a National Government consisting entirely of Indian influential political leaders, they never face the question of whom that Government is to be responsible to, nor do they face the question that until there is agreement on the main principles of the future Government. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru proposed this kind of Government responsible to itself, composed of Indian leaders, but they have never produced any indication even of the composition of that Government or of the possibilities of agreement with regard to it. Mr. Jinnah has condemned the Sapru scheme outright and declared the revolt of the Moslem League against it, and we know that the least he asks for himself under any Government of that sort is equal representation with Congress and all the Hindu elements together. There is not the slightest chance of Congress looking at that, so that from the Constitutional point of view it is not possible to set up this moment a Government based on any new Constitutional principle, and there is also a practical point of view which more particularly centres on the issue of defence. It is not possible in practice at this moment to divest His Majesty's Government and the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy of the responsibility for the defence of India and all that goes with defence—communications, supplies, Local Government and so on. It is not merely that the defence of India is part of our general war against the Axis. It is that the defence of India is inextricably and immediately bound up with the defence of Ceylon, which may become very vital in the immediate future; with the defence of Burma; with the control of the Indian Ocean. In those matters Sir Archibald Wavell is the single Commander-in-Chief over all. He must be absolutely free to move his Forces, his air and land Forces, where they are needed from the strategical point of view, and the same applies to the Naval Commander-in-Chief in the Indian Ocean. Again, the Forces we have there and in the perimeter of India include, besides the Indian Army, British troops, British air forces, and, as I have said before, the Navy. Finally, the Indian Army is an historic Army voluntarily recruited, with a great tradition, but it is a tradition of loyalty to the King Emperor, and to the Commander-in-Chief, and it is by no means certain that the entrusting of defence to an Indian member of the Executive would not create the most serious difficulties within the Indian Army itself and from that point of view it would be very prejudicial and dangerous to the whole defence of India.

Therefore, the idea that you can hand over the general control of the Government of India today and, above all, control of defence to an Indian member of the Executive is really out of the question. What has been offered and what is a function of no small importance in connection with defence—of course I am talking entirely off the record now, we shall know in

48 hours or so whether that offer is acceptable or not—is a function which an Indian politician can most effectively and fittingly exercise that of coordinating the whole business of defence with civil defence, with local government, with the work of the provinces, with the other departments of the centre, and with a good many of the functions of the Defence Department at present which do not directly affect the Commander-in-Chief's control over the whole military machine. So far as we can possibly go in that direction we are going and we believe the offer we have made in that respect is an eminently fair one and one which, from the point of view of anyone who both wants the success of the war and in general terms accepts our pledges for the future of India, should be an acceptable offer. If it is rejected, it will not be because the post is not of real importance, but because Congress leaders will have made up their minds on general grounds to reject our scheme anyhow. It will not be because Sir Stafford Cripps and the Viceroy have been sticky and have refused to make some tolerable concession in order to bring about a big result and bring the whole mass of India right behind the Government's war effort. It will not be that. It will be because the Congress leaders did not want agreement except on their own terms, their own terms as against the Government here, their own terms as against the Moslems, their own terms as against the rights of the Princes to decide on their own representation on any constitution-making body. The Working Committee of Congress passed a Resolution a few days ago which has not yet been published. I see that Malulana Abul Kalam Azad said it would probably be published today or it may be tomorrow, but I think its general character has been pretty freely indicated in the Indian Press and has been telegraphed here. I think it will confirm that, if there is a breakdown, it will not be in fact on the particular issue of such defence powers as are or are not given to an Indian member of the Executive, but on Congress's rejection of the scheme as a whole as not fitting in with its conception of its in fact rightful authority to govern India.

Q.: Is it not the fact that the existing frontiers of some of the provinces are to a certain extent arbitrary and is it essential to your scheme that the constituents of the Constituent Assembly should be based upon existing Provinces? For example, it appears to be one of the difficulties of the Sikhs that they are inside the Punjab. Is it necessary, if you take that example, that the Punjab as a whole should be treated as a Province?

SOS: It is perfectly true that the existing frontiers arose under bureaucratic conditions and did not entirely coincide with communal or racial boundaries. That is in one sense an argument encouraging the hope that the outcome of the decision will be unity and not division, but there was the further question that if you were to set up a body as quickly as possible after the war you must start with some existing method of representation and turning over the whole field we came to the conclusion that the Lower House of Provinces did in fact offer the most natural basis. The only criticism from India of the suggested constitution-making body, and it is only a suggestion, has come from those who have said that the whole of the Province should not form a single electorate, but that each Province would select its own delegation. The provincial spirit, however the Provinces have grown up, is a very strong thing. As I indicated just now, it is a very strong thing in the Punjab and in Bengal and in Orissa, which was definitely carved out to meet the Oriya-speaking population's demand for a separate representation. It is I think the nearest we can get, but we have never excluded the idea that when they come down to business it may be part of the terms of compromise that there should be readjustments of boundaries. It may very well be that the Sikhs will either so effectively throw their weight in the Punjab against non-adhesion as to justify Mr. Jinnah's fears, or that the Moslems will offer

them an internal autonomy within the Punjab or a special position. They do in fact enjoy very considerable powers in the Punjab already politically, but the whole of our idea is to set up something that will bring the process of discussion and argument and practical getting together in being. I have always held the view that if you once begin on customs tariffs, telegrams, aviation, railways, with the interlocking of elements, the arguments for union are so strong that even Pakistan will recede into the background, but if you deny the Moslems the right to stand out then they harden their heart and will refuse to discuss anything. In fact I think it could not be put better than Sir Stafford Cripps put it in one of his Press talks when he said 'If you say to people "you come into the room and the door is locked behind you and the thing is settled by a majority", then they will not come in to the room.' Indeed, if we had not got the non-adhesion principle I should think it very probable certain Provinces would refuse to join the party from the start. As Sir Stafford Cripps says, 'Come into the room and discuss the plan in partnership and if you do not like it you can always go out by the other door' then there is no reason of not coming in.

Q.: May I enquire if Congress accepts the plan, is it proposed to transfer from the India Office to the Dominions Office Indian affairs, or would that await the framing of the Constitution to bring it into force?

SOS: I do not think there will be question of transferring Indian affairs. In the first place, the India Office has to do a tremendous amount of work on behalf of India. I should say the bulk of the work done by the India Office at this moment concerns not the internal government of India but the multifarious demands of the Indian Army upon the Treasury and War Office and Air Ministry for equipment of all sorts and concerns a great deal of work that is being done in India for Departments here and paid for by Departments here, all of which has to come through the same channel and requires a very considerable staff to deal with it. You could not hand over the India Office plus the Burma Office, which is also of some little importance, to a Department like the Dominions Office which has very little administrative work to do and occupies comparatively few rooms in what was the old Colonial Office building. What will be the position after the new Indian Constitution is formed I do not know. Then it would be a matter of convenience. If there was so little work then being done as not to justify a separate Department, then it might be handed over to an enlarged Dominions Office. I cannot say. At any rate, there could be no question at present of overloading the Dominions Office with the enormous burden of the work of an office which by necessities of the case is a much bigger office both on the military and the civilian side than Dominions Office, but of one thing I can assure you, that there is no such thing as 'the dead hand of the India Office weighing on the whole administration of India'. The administration of India is far too big a thing to be settled day by day in the India Office.

Q.: Has it been possible to deduce from the Working Committee's Resolution and from such other information as may be available whether, if arrangements acceptable to Congress as to a Defence Member can be made, they will then accept the main scheme of post-war settlement?

SOS: I think you have always to distinguish a little bit between what you might call public denunciation of a thing and practical agreement. If in their heart of hearts, having passed Resolutions denouncing the scheme from various points of view, they still think it is not so bad and they come to an agreement about the Defence Portfolio or the Portfolio that is suggested to them, then they come in and whether they publish their criticism or not it will stand on record, but it does not mean that they would come in and co-operate. As I say, what I am afraid of is

that they do intend to reject the proposals as a whole and will look upon the defence question more as a tactical issue for breaking off the negotiations than as the real reason.

Q.: Do they envisage an Indian Defence Minister as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council as at present constituted, or as part of a new National Government during the interim period?

SOS: I do not know. After all, there have been a great many discussions and a certain amount has been said in public. This morning's paper attributed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru the statement that the real question was who was boss, the Indian or the Commander-in-Chief, and implying that he thought the Indians should be boss. That is of course a fundamental issue.

Q.: On the question of the Provinces, what elasticity have you in your scheme in the case, say, of Bengal where there is a Moslem majority in Eastern Bengal? Do you contemplate that they could separate and become a separate unit?

SOS: Bengal has numerically from the point of view of population a small Moslem majority, I think it is 54 per cent Moslem and 46 per cent Hindu. If Bengal wished to stand out, it has a population of 50 million, two and half times as much as the whole of Dominions added together, but of course Mr. Jinnah's fear is that the Hindu element which owns most of industries in Bengal and therefore most of the money will be able to secure that Bengal at any rate will stand out. If it does stand out, well then it stands out for the time being. I would if I may come back to the question of Pakistan for the moment. Supposing that the worst happens, in one sense, and that the North-Western Provinces stood out, that Bengal stood out, and as is certainly probable, that a good many of the major States stood out, Hyderabad and so on, those separations running across the whole problem of India's economic unity—railway unity and so on—will force the separate Governments to meet in some sort of standing Conference during the period. I imagine if that happens, as in the case of Burma, you will provide at any rate for three years or so that a common tariff would remain, but those Governments would have to meet to consult together and would almost certainly in the outcome frame some sort of *modus vivendi* constitution for their common defence and in working together. I have in mind, if those things happen, the kind of constitution that existed in the United States in the case of the seceding American Colonies between their independence and the date when they found that such a loose Confederation was so unworkable that they finally framed the present American Constitution.

It might well be that the first Constitutional scheme emerging after the liberation of India from British control would be a difficult and unworkable one because of the various elements and would lead up to closer and more effective union once the various elements felt their feet, but the beginning of the process of feeling their feet is in the Provinces, the right of saying 'Will we come in or not?'. That is the beginning of true independence and the true Dominion spirit.

Q.: But you do rather feel, as you express it yourself, that the proposed scheme would be difficult and unworkable?

SOS: Not unworkable in the sense that it would not get along somehow, but that it might lead those concerned to frame a closer scheme, again I do not call that a new scheme. The whole essence of our policy is to make Indians face the responsibility of framing a scheme for India themselves. If they can agree about a scheme then they will work it. Nobody is going to work a Constitution which has been imposed upon them against their will. We work our Constitution because we have agreed to it for centuries. There is no Constitution that cannot be made

entirely unworkable if there is a considerable element that dislikes it. The British Constitution was pretty nearly wrecked by the Irish. If we had to force a majority Constitution upon India I have no doubt the Moslems would probably wreck it in the parliamentary sense, if they did not wreck it in the military sense long before.

Q.: You say it is a thing for Indians themselves to do, but the secession clause, the right of the states to stand out, is to be dictated from here. That is not a thing for Indians to decide as to whether they will have it or will not have it.

SOS: It is only another way of saying, as I put it, that we are not prepared to see any substantial part of India coerced into a majority Constitution, but on the other hand we are prepared to allow those parts of India that want to go ahead to go ahead without being held up by the others.

Q.: On the other hand, take Bengal, you say Bengal must not be coerced, if Bengal votes by 54 per cent to 46 per cent standing out, what about 46 per cent? Are you prepared to see them coerced into saying in Bengal? Can you get away from the coercion of minorities?

SOS: In all those matters, the question of self-determination is always a question of area. There was no case, by a majority vote perhaps, for the Irish Free State ever being set up. They were in an infinitesimal minority in the United Kingdom, but they felt very strongly, and they included a certain minority who would sooner not have gone out. Ulster was separated, but Ulster again included a considerable minority that would sooner have been in Eire. All you can do is to minimize the element of coercion and injustice as much as possible. What one hopes is that so large a minority in Bengal will see to it that they persuade the majority of the advantages of unity, but we come back to the point that it is by agreement they have to go forward. I do want to make it quite clear that it is not that we are forcing this question of secession on India. What we have insisted upon is that there shall not be coercion of major elements, and in order to enable India to go ahead consistently with that pledge of ours we have said that those Provinces that wish to get ahead without certain others can go ahead. The form in which it is put in the Declaration, which is a Constitutional document, leaves the right of non-adhesion because we wanted, and Mr. Jinnah has criticised this, we wanted to correct the bias towards unity by suggesting an All-India Constitution-making Body; we might quite possibly have said that the constitution-making body should consist of such provinces as wished to come together. That would have been in a sense following the Dominion analogy even more closely, but I quite agree you must not press that analogy too far. Therefore, we have begun with a constitution-making body on which all Parties are represented, but in which the ultimate right of standing out remains with any Province that feels that this Constitution imposes an injustice upon it. What one always hopes is that in the course of the discussion during the convention the arguments of those Provinces will be met in one way or another.

Q.: But the right of coercing the minority is not to be denied, it is to be vested in Provincial Governments?

SOS: It has been reduced to a small area, that is quite true. After all, there is a limit to which you can split it up. You may have to readjust your boundaries. You may have even to create an autonomy within a Province, but at any rate in order to get a beginning you have the existing organisations. After all, in international affairs we have always taken that point of view. We have never admitted, I hope not at any rate, the German contention that Czechoslovakia had no right to its existence because there was a Sudeten minority.

Q.: You spoke of Congress exercising pressure upon us through America. Are you referring to something that has happened recently?

SOS: No. I am afraid American public opinion has been predominantly influenced by lecturers and speakers from the Congress point of view and in fact America generally has accepted the view that Congress speaks for the whole of India and that it is a simple matter to 'give India what she wants', although there is in fact no such 'she' in existence or ascertainable, although we should like to see an India that could be described as 'she'.

Q.: What do you propose to do if Congress does reject the scheme, apart from putting the blame on Congress?

SOS: Go ahead with the existing Government of India as it is, carry on the ordinary administration, carry on the law.

Q.: What about the Declaration of 1940, would that still stand?

SOS: Yes, and I imagine our general pledge as to the future still stands; we do not withdraw it; it remains open for acceptance later.

Q.: The whole scheme?

SOS: Yes.

Q.: The clarification of the 1940 Declaration?

SOS: The whole scheme so far as we are concerned stands because it is the best scheme we can think of, but of course it does not come into the picture any more for the moment. Cooperation during the war, if that has been rejected then we go ahead without cooperation, but our general offer for the future stands on record.

Q.: What I want to get at is this. If this offer is rejected, when we have to comment about it shall we be able to say that nevertheless the declarations with regard to Dominion status and so on still stand?

SOS: Oh, yes. We do not say, 'This is our conception of how thing should happen, but if you do not accept immediate cooperation the whole thing is washed out'.

Q.: That was rather implied in the original statement.

SOS: It referred to the whole thing including the important Section (e) which deals with the present. Oh, no. After all, this is only unfolding and giving precision to what we have already pledged ourselves to in 1940. If I might put it this way, if Indians had had the kind of mentality the Dominion people had, to make use of whatever is offered in order to get more, they would have said at the time of the Declaration of 1940, 'Will you please give us a closer definition, does it mean, as the Balfour Declaration made it clear in regard to the Dominions, equal in every respect' and we should have had to say 'Yes', and if they had said 'From the point of view of status, these obligations you refer to, do you mean to enforce them upon us or would you be agreeable to doing it in a more favourable way?', I think we should also have said 'Very well, we are willing to consider that', and if they had said 'Our conception of a constitution-making body is one based on a Provincial Legislature', we should have accepted that and if they had said 'Can a majority of Provinces go ahead even if some Provinces do not what to cooperate?' we should have said 'Yes'. There is nothing that we declare now in what we think the best way of doing it that the Indians could not have asked for for themselves as implicit or possible in the Declaration of August 1940. It is only giving it full effect and full precision to what underlay the general broad offer and the generous offer we made then. It is not so-to-speak that there

has been a death-bed repentance as to the British future in India. The whole policy was there in germ, in essence, before, but it had met with suspicion and depreciation, and we thought the time had come to clear up all those suspicions in order to secure more effective cooperation now that the war is at India's gate.

Q.: You said we should know within 48 hours the results of the negotiations. Does that mean there is a time limit?

SOS: No. What I mean is this. I believe Sir Stafford Cripps has been meeting the Congress people today and they will presumably either say 'Yes' or 'No', or they will go back to the Working Committee if they are inclined to continue the negotiations, and I imagine that in a matter of something like 48 hours we shall hear. Perhaps it may be longer, it may be 96 hours possibly, but I should think the probabilities are we shall know in the next couple of days and that is why I thought it desirable, when Mr. Bracken suggested it, that we should meet here to give you the whole background and the meaning and purpose behind the British Government policy.

Q.: We might know whether they wished to negotiate further, but we should not necessarily know whether they had accepted the scheme or not.

SOS: I think it has come to a somewhat narrower point than that. They have passed a general resolution criticising, not condemning but criticising, but they have also at any rate been willing to meet Sir Archibald Wavell and Sir Stafford Cripps again to discuss this question of whether an Indian member should be given control of some Ministry connected with Defence. I think it would be pretty certain after that meeting, whether they thought it good enough from their point of view or did not think it good enough, although they might go through the form of consulting their Working Committee again, I should have thought a decision one way or another would be known pretty soon.

Q.: Is it the case that acceptance or breakdown depends upon the single issue of the appointment of an Indian Defence Minister and not on the question of minorities?

SOS: I hoped I had made that clear. That may be to some people the last straw, but if it breaks down on that point it certainly will not be because of that; it will be because of their unwillingness to accept the scheme as a whole.

Q.: Do the new instructions sent to Sir Stafford Cripps cover any modifications beyond that question of a Defence Minister?

SOS: He has had, in the details of the interpretation of the clauses of the Declaration, a fairly free hand within certain limits. I do not think I can go too closely into his instructions, but as I have said before, the essential responsibility of the Government of India to Parliament here and the complete control of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief over defence in all its aspects is set out quite clearly in Section (e).

Q.: What are you proposing to call the new Member, Member for Defence?

SOS: I think the question of nomenclature is one of the points that is being discussed at this moment.

Q.: Would you feel any great objection to calling him Defence Minister?

SOS: I do not know about 'Defence Minister'; Minister for Defence Co-ordination perhaps, but I think you must trust Sir Stafford Cripps, as we trust him. He is a very experienced negotiator and he has staked his career, most courageously, on going out to conduct these negotiations and

he is deeply anxious they should succeed, not from a personal point of view, but far more from the point of view that he is an intense believer in Indian self-government, and I think you can trust him as certainly we trust him not to omit any little device that would make things easier.

Q.: I was not distrusting him. I was only asking whether there was any objection over here to using the word Defence Minister. You rather suggested there was because he would only be dealing with part of defence, but we have a Secretary of State for War who only deals with part of the war, but it does not matter. It is nothing to do with not trusting Sir Stafford Cripps, but sentiment is extraordinarily important in these things.

SOS: What I meant was that we had largely left it to him and you can be sure that if there was anything in a change of names, as long as it did not create real misunderstanding, he would adopt it.

Q.: He has a free hand to do that?

SOS: Yes.

Q.: Is the question of the Indian Defence Minister the only major question so far remitted by Sir Stafford Cripps for consideration by the War Cabinet?

SOS: There may well be questions of other portfolios and so on, but they have not arisen yet. If there were agreement in general principle I have no doubt Sir Stafford might have to remain out there a little bit longer to discuss other possible posts in the Government, although once the general principle is settled of course it is for the Viceroy to reconstitute his own Executive Council and you cannot have somebody else forming your Government for you. What Sir Stafford Cripps has gone out to do is to settle the broad principles of agreement and in connection with that he has discussed one particular detailed point arising out of the question of Defence. If there is agreement on that then no doubt the other matters will be either discussed in general terms by him or settled by the Viceroy. I admit there are probably rather intricate questions of, for instance, if this new portfolio in connection with defence is occupied by a Hindu what will the Moslems get to balance it, or if a Moslem gets that portfolio what will the Hindus get to balance it and all those sort of things will come into the picture if there is agreement.

Q.: Are the Americans mediating?

SOS: Oh no. I think the last thing President Roosevelt would wish to do would be to mediate. We all know the general point of view of the Americans and their general sympathies and that America would heartily wish for an agreement, but I think 'mediation' would not be the appropriate word.

Q.: There has been a good deal of speculation about that mysterious letter the President is supposed to have sent to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

SOS: I know nothing about that.

Q.: Are we to understand that what you have said is to be used only when a decision has been announced?

SOS: Yes. I have been talking very frankly and off the record in order to give you our outlook and a background. I do not think anything I have said is suitable for quotation, but it is suitable for guidance. I have prepared something for guidance, for the use of your leader writers and others in judging of the situation when it emerges, whether successfully or unsuccessfully.... If

it emerges successfully and there are further developments coming along subsequently, if it should be your wish I would meet you again and have another talk.

Q.: But meanwhile nothing you have said is to be used?

SOS: No, it is not to be used except as background for guidance.

Q: The point arises that you have given us something that might be definite news, or might easily look like definite news, but that is not to be touched as news?

MINISTER OF INFORMATION: Not until Sir Stafford Cripps makes his announcement from India. The news must come from India.

We are all very much obliged to the Secretary of State for India for coming here today.

63. Telegram from F. Puckle to Joyce on the Possible Implications of Both Acceptance and Rejection by the Major Actors, Anticipating a 'Quit India' Type of Movement and Unprecedented Repression by the British, in Case the Scheme Is Rejected, 7 April 1942

TOP, Vol. I., pp. 686–8.

The note below deals with probable effect on war effort particularly recruiting and industrial output in event of (a) acceptance or (b) rejection of the proposals and lines which may be taken with press correspondents....

It may perhaps be assumed if Congress accept British Government's scheme, the Muslim League in order not to be left out in the cold will also accept. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikhs are not likely to accept any scheme which permits creation of some sort of Pakistan. Advantages of this degree of settlement would be: (a) cessation of constant nagging against Government which Nationalist press indulges in. This should result in steadying of, if not definite improvement in, morale in towns and of educated classes, who by and large are Nationalists. Psychological gain would be considerable. (b) Some improvement in recruiting Hindu young men particularly those qualified by status and education to be officers. (c) Greater readiness to subscribe to war loans and accept additional taxation.

The disadvantages would be:

- (a) Probable deterioration of communal relations since Hindu Mahasabha and Sikhs would almost certainly start a raging agitation against Pakistan.
- (b) Nervousness amongst Europeans and Government servants and classes which are already fully supporting war effort e.g. the Punjab. The war record of leading Congressmen does not inspire any confidence that they are not infested with 'Petainism' and many people, Indian as well as British, doubt whether a National Government in which Congress had large influence would be 100 per cent prepared to see the war through.

2. If as today seems more likely to happen the scheme is rejected the position may be something as follows: We may assume that though official attitude of League may not change the Moslem Community in general is satisfied that the scheme attempted to protect them: we can probably rely on increased cooperation from Moslems in general, as distinct from their political organisations. Hindu Mahasabha and Sikhs will be relieved that the scheme is dead for the present and there is unlikely to be any material change in their attitude towards the war

effort. The Congress will be in a difficult position; the scheme gives a great deal of what they have been demanding and they will have an uneasy conscience and will have to justify their action to Congressmen, to India and to the world. Even if we take at its face value a recent statement that Congress will maintain its policy of not embarrassing us in the conduct of the war, a policy which has sometimes been rather curiously interpreted in conduct, we can expect increased nagging and criticism of the Government.

This will inevitably still further weaken the morale in the towns and of the educated classes and may absolutely destroy it. Position as regards labour seems unlikely to be affected, and the output of munitions etc. should not fall off. In the army, at any rate so far as the old martial classes are concerned, there may be a feeling of relief at disappearance of the prospect of Congress control of the forces of the Crown, though young officers may share the depression of their civilian friends. In general, recruitment from classes which are at present offering themselves, is not likely to be affected. Extension of recruitment to other classes and recruitment for commissioned ranks may suffer. To sum up, failure of Sir Stafford Cripps will not seriously, if at all directly affect the material side of the war effort; it will weaken the morale and encourage defeatism and to that extent indirectly affect the war effort.

3. This presupposes that rejection of the scheme will not be followed by acute communal trouble and Congress will not indulge in other than passive anti-war agitation.

I do not think communal trouble is likely. The danger is that Congress may intensify anti-war agitation to such an extent that the Government will not be able to ignore it and will be driven to 'repressive' measures, amounting, may be, in places, to martial law. In circumstances such as these we must expect labour trouble, sabotage and fifth column activities—in fact a very grave menace to India's chances of defending herself successfully. Any such deterioration is likely to coincide with air raids on Indian towns or a Japanese landing. If it ever does come to this, it will be by the deliberate wish and action of Congress.

4. Our scheme of publicity should be as follows, in case of failure:

- (i) The future. We have offered everything which the nationalists have asked for: the right of secession from Empire; self-determination; constitution to be framed by Indians in a freely elected democratic body; no special protection for British business or British civil servants.

The right of non-accession may be a stumbling block in the U.S.A. It is one thing to coerce a political minority, quite another when the minority is religious. It rests with the constitution-making body, i.e., with Indians to devise terms which will keep the minorities within the Union. If they cannot do this is it suggested that British bayonets should compel the minorities to stay in? The biggest, Muslims, are one third of the population of British India.

The States may be another stumbling block. Again it rests with the constitution-making body i.e. Indians to devise terms which will bring the States into the Union. If not, is it again suggested that Britain should break her treaties or compel the States to come in by force?

- (ii) The present—what we can say here depends a good deal on what Cripps has offered but the arguments against handing over the complete control of the war effort to the interim Indian Government seem to be realised in the U.S.A.



64. Notes by Lord Linlithgow of His Meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps on the American Connection and Some Contradictions between HMG and Viceroy, also the Cripps–Johnson Formula, 8 April 1942
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 141, NMML.

I saw Cripps at 10 p.m., having asked Colonel Louis Johnson to come to Viceroy's House at 10.15 p.m.

I told Cripps I had not had time to examine the formula brought me [*sic*] from him by Mr. Hodson. Nor had my advisers had time fully to examine it. I must therefore be regarded as speaking informally. I thought I should have difficulty in accepting paragraph (d) which secures to H.M.G. the decision as to the allocation of disputed subjects as between the Defence and War Departments. I thought this a serious invasion of the Governor-General's powers in allocating functions to Departments. I would have to see what my people thought about this. Cripps replied that he understood my position and that I would require time to examine the formula. As to (d) he himself took the view that since the bargain was one between H.M.G. and parties in India, it was better that H.M.G. should decide disputes, if only because Congress would suspect the Viceroy of being biased in favour of the Commander-in-Chief.

I said that I was myself nervous about the list of function to go to the War Department unless the opposite list (that of the function to be left with the Defence Member) was also to find a place in the formula. But there were probably other matters in which I might find difficulty which would emerge on fuller examination of the language. Sir Stafford then said that he thought Congress would come in on this formula and Johnson had gathered that from them. I asked how Congress had come to know about this formula. Cripps replied that Johnson had shown it to them, but that they had not got it. I at once protested against Congress having been shown the draft, and said that the fact that Johnson had shown it to them made the position all the worse, given the U.S.A. position in the business. If I were now to differ from the draft, my position might well be rendered intolerable, as I ran the risk of being held up to the U.S.A. as the obstacle to a settlement.

Cripps then said that matters had reached a climax in which something had to be done about it and generally glozed over the incident.

Johnson then came in.

I put a point to sir Stafford and Colonel Johnson as follows. Suppose for the sake of argument that Congress felt the need of a supreme effort to recover their propaganda position in the U.S.A., what would they do? Surely, they would try to interest Colonel Johnson and if possible so to work things as to emphasize the difference between what Johnson thought good and reasonable but what the British thought unsound—stressing the point that the U.S.A. who were going to send supplies and arms and their own sons to India to fight for India were just as much interested in the soundness of the picture in India as any Britisher. So it would be claimed the fault must lie on the British side. I was not, I said, prejudiced in favour of this theory, but it was a possibility that they ought to watch closely. The evidence for it is—

- (a) Nehru calls on Colonel Johnson uninvited,
- (b) a cartoon appears in *Hindustan Times* depicting president Roosevelt stepping in to help sir Stafford in his task of solving the deadlock,
- (c) a headline appears 'Will America intervene in time?'

- (d) a promoted telegram goes to U.S.A. from the United Press to say that agreement has been reached and that Sir Stafford and Colonel Johnson had tried to stop the telegram but someone had arranged to the contrary.

The indications were not enough to constitute even a probability, but it was worth watching closely.

Sir Stafford said that he had spotted this possibility the previous evening and was terrified of Congress coming back on the annexure to last night's formula (i.e., the formula based on the list of powers to be held by the Defence Minister) and offering to agree if 'recruiting' were added to the list of subjects to be given to the new Defence Minister. If so both the Viceroy and he himself in the House of Commons would have found it most difficult to justify a refusal on our part to give way on that one point, since its significance would not be understood either at home or in the U.S.A.

Colonel Johnson then said that the Congress was going to settle, and on this formula.

I enquired when they were going to consider the new formula. Colonel Johnson replied 'tonight—they are on it now—the formula on which I agreed with Sir Stafford Cripps this evening'.

Colonel Johnson then left with Sir Stafford. I called Sir Stafford back alone. I made a further and direct complaint about the manner in which I and the commander-in-Chief had been passed over. We had—neither of us—had any opportunity of examining the formula before it had been shown to Colonel Johnson and to the Congress Working Committee. Cripps said that the situation was getting hot and he had had to do something. Hodson had seen the formula (Mr. Hodson has since said that the document was only in his hands for a few minutes and that he certainly did not commit anyone to it). I remarked that Mr. Hodson was not the Governor-General and that Commander-in-Chief had not seen it.

Sir Stafford replied that the list of subjects for the War Department was my own list (referring to a list included in a different formula drafted by Messrs. Hodson and Ogilvie).

I pointed out that this did not justify presenting it to Congress in changed trappings.

Concluding the conversation I observed that I did not base myself on any matter of dignity but would found myself on the merits of the formula as it had been shown to Congress, and on the best opinion I could form about it after consulting my advisers.

65. Letter from J. Herbert, Governor of Bengal, to Lord Linlithgow on the Reaction in Bengal to Proposals and to Sir Stafford Cripps's Decision to Prolong His Stay in India, 8 April 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 42, NMML.

Political. The decision of Stafford Cripps to prolong his stay in India has revived expectancy: prior to that the general tone of the press indicated a belief that his mission had failed. The attitude of the Forward Bloc newspapers in Bengal, the *Amrita Bazar* and *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, has been most objectionable, since it has been deliberately designed to emphasise the futility of the proposals, and to suggest that the country must look rather to the Bose brothers for its freedom. The Hindu Mahasabha appears to have definitely rejected the proposals, and thus emphasised that Party's attitude that it will be content with nothing but Hindu rule. Information recently received indicates that the Mahasabha would be prepared to go to the length of

invoking any outside power to attain their object, and suggests that this Party may prove to be the most strongly pro-Japanese. It considers—so this information states—that if Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru were to be placed in charge of the defence of India, that would be regarded as tantamount to a surrender to the British proposals, and that the Mahasabha would have to fight Congress over that issue. There is no pleasing some people.

The attitude of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha Party is reflected in the conduct of my Finance Minister S.P. Mookerjee, who has openly stated that real power is deliberately withheld by the British, in complete disregard of the fact that he took an oath of office under the Constitution Act of 1935. Actually the boot is on the other leg: in matters affecting war, I am not being given the advice which it is my constitutional right to receive, and I have little doubt that the first paragraph of the Home Department Report is correct in stating that many persons whose genuine sympathies are with Government are showing a tendency to doubt whether the Bengal Government either means business or has any grip at all. If the Cripps mission fails, it is possible that difficulties with my present ministry will become intensified, and if the war comes still closer, indications may appear of the intention to cave into to the enemy. In that event, there could be no alternative to Section 92, which would, I believe, be acceptable to the major political parties for the duration of the war. If India is invaded, the strongest possible lead will have to be given, and that will not come from political parties who are now fighting among themselves: the only lead can come from representatives of the crown and all the forces that are behind them for the defence of the country and are dealing with fifth columnists. I feel that any other system would risk disaster.

66. Lord Linlithgow's Telegram to L.S. Amery Explaining the Cripps-Johnson Formula

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 22, NMML.

9 April 1942

Latest developments are as follows:

- (a) After discussion with Cripps and Wavell on evening of 7th April, formula given in my immediately following telegram was agreed as one to be taken by Colonel Johnson as his suggestion to Nehru today and to be resubmitted as Congress suggestion if they agreed. This was consequent on representation made by Johnson to Wavell that if Defence formula could be produced in a modified form, there was some chance of its acceptance by Nehru.
- (b) I tonight (8th April) at 10.00 p.m. saw first Cripps and thereafter Cripps and Johnson together. I made the point that the latest Congress manoeuvres might well be designed to drive wedge between His Majesty's Government and U.S.A. Johnson replied that he had reason to believe Congress were prepared to accept latest formula, as agreed between Cripps and himself, and were actually now examining it. Text of formula which had been sent to me and to the Commander-in-Chief at 7.15 p.m. tonight as being one which Cripps thought a satisfactory redraft of one propounded to Johnson by Nehru but of course without any indication that it was to be taken back to the Congress until Wavell and I had considered it As you will see it differs in vital particulars from text referred in (a) above. Cripps (after Johnson had left) admitted that he had let this formula go to Congress on the

ground that situation had got hot and something had to be done and endeavoured to gloze it over. After Johnson had left I said I would not conceal my own strong feeling of grievance, though that could not be paramount in any way, but I must reserve judgement until I had seen the Chief, which I will do on the morning of the 9th April.

2. I refrain at this stage from comment on the formula save to say that its restrictive character will be evident. Paragraph (d), drafted by Cripps, cuts across of course position of the Governor-General.
3. On tactics, public interest must be paramount, and no feeling of personal grievance can be allowed to count. Nor do I raise issue of its consistency with instructions of War Cabinet. If Wavell is content to accept this formula, I will work it with all the strength I can, and do my best with it. That is equally true of any modified version (I need not trouble you with drafting amendments which might improve matters) which Wavell proposes and we can secure (if Wavell is unable to accept, I will of course back him), for we cannot run the risk of the Governor-General, the Chief and His Majesty's Government being shown as unwilling to honour a formula agreed between His Majesty's Government's emissary and Roosevelt's personal representative, if that formula secures the support not only of Congress but of the Muslim League (who have not yet been brought into this latest development, and whose attitude I cannot speak for), I assume that that will be the wish of the Cabinet and would welcome earliest possible instructions.

67. Lord Linlithgow's Telegram to L.S. Amery Containing the Text of the Cripps-Johnson Formula, 9 April 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 22, NMML.

- (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, until the new constitution comes into operation, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be a member of the Executive Council for that purpose.
- (b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.
- (c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence in the Defence Department and those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department in addition to other important matters closely related to Defence.
- (d) In the event of any new functions falling to be discharged in relation to Defence or any dispute arising as to the allocation of any old functions it shall be decided by His Majesty's Government.

Following is list referred to in (b) above:

The War Department, for which the Commander-in-Chief will be Member, will be responsible for the governmental relations of G.H.Q., N.H.Q., and A.H.Q. [General Headquarters, Naval Headquarters, Air Headquarters] which include—

- (1) Examining and sanctioning all proposals emanating from G.H.Q., N.H.Q., and A.H.Q.

- (2) Representing the policy of Government on all questions connected with the war which originate in or concern G.H.Q., N.H.Q. or A.H.Q.
- (3) Acting as the channel of communication between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government on all such questions.
- (4) Acting as liaison between these Headquarters and other Departments of Government, and Provincial Government.

68. Sir Stafford Cripps's Telegram to Winston Churchill on the Slightly Revised Cripps-Johnson Formula and the Possibility of All Parties Agreeing to It

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 713-14.

10 April 1942

Following is text of formula on basis of which I am now negotiating. It incorporates alterations desired by Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief and I understand that it substantially meets their views. It is the outcome of long series discussions in which Johnson has been invaluable as an intermediary and I urge most strongly that this formula should be agreed to. Without it there is no prospect of success but on this basis there is now considerable chance.

Formula begins. (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the armed forces in India, and who will be the member of the Executive Council in charge of the War Department. (b) This Department will take over such governmental functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as War Member. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached. (c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence in the Defence Department and those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department in addition to other important matters closely related to Defence. (d) In the event of any new functions falling to be discharged in relation to Defence or any dispute arising as to the allocation of any old functions it shall be decided by His Majesty's Government.

List of functions of War Member begins. The War Department, for which the Commander-in-Chief will be member, will be responsible for the governmental relations of General Headquarters, Naval Headquarters and Air Headquarters which include: (1) Examining and sanctioning all proposals emanating from General Headquarters, Naval Headquarters and Air Headquarters. (2) Representing the policy of Government on all questions connected with the war which originate in or concern General Headquarters, Naval Headquarters, or Air Headquarters. (3) Acting as the channel of communication between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government on all such questions. (4) Acting as liaison between these headquarters and the other Departments of Government, and Provincial Governments. *List ends.*

Transfer in form of Defence Department is essential feature of this formula and gives much better chance than creation of Defence Co-ordination Department. In fact however effect is the same in content as proposal put in my letter to Azad.... List of functions of War Member was drafted by Government of India experts and I am satisfied that it will retain for Commander-in-Chief all necessary functions. I understand Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief agree that it meets their requirements but am asking them to telegraph their views separately as desired....

As I expect to receive views of Congress on proposed formula tomorrow it is essential that I should have War Cabinet's authority to proceed on this basis not later than tomorrow evening. If on basis of this formula they are ready to enter reconstructed Executive Council I shall make it clear that this can only happen on basis of issue of declaration as a whole by His Majesty's Government. We cannot expect that any party will endorse declaration as a whole as each will take exception to different points. If Congress agree to come into a National Government I feel confident that Muslim League will do so also. Hindu Mahasabha have already agreed subject to reservations on long-term policy and I have no doubt that Sikhs and Depressed Classes would also come in.

69. Sir Stafford Cripps's Telegram to War Cabinet Putting Forward a Defence of His Formula, Removing Doubts, and Offering to Quit the Job If Doubts Persisted

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 715–17.

10 April 1942

... It was suggested that offer in my letter to Azad would be more acceptable if Defence Department were promised to an Indian Member and all necessary functions transferred from it to the Commander-in-Chief as War Member. Two formulas were in the field at this stage, one by myself listing functions to be 'retained' by Defence Department in exactly same way as in letter to Azad, and transferring all others to Commander-in-Chief as War Member; the other by the Viceroy, defining functions of both War Member and Defence Coordination Member. Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief accepted my draft and it was put to Congress. Subsequently it became clear that offer would be more acceptable if it were made in form which defined War Member's functions to be transferred from Defence Department. I then drafted a formula based on Viceroy's original draft, and, since there was no substantial difference, and annexed list of functions of War Member was identical in terms with that in Viceroy's own draft, I suggested to Congress tentatively that I would consider such a formula if they were prepared to accept it. Subsequently I showed it to Viceroy who suggested some drafting changes to which I have since secured agreement. Resulting text is that telegraphed in my last telegram and is in form agreed, as I understand it, by Viceroy, except that words 'until new constitution comes into operation' have been omitted after 'exercised' in (a). Congress would not accept this though I included it in text which I discussed with them.

... The reason for making the decision that of His Majesty's Government and not the Viceroy was because the Viceroy would be one party to the dispute if it arose and the dispute would concern the document agreed by His Majesty's Government and would not concern the constitution. Congress would not accept the Viceroy's decision on this point, I am certain, nor could I put it forward as a reasonable or just arrangement....

It would be quite easy to draft the document in many different ways, covering the same points, but it is necessary to adopt the one which makes success most likely. The whole question is whether Congress, in which there is a division, can persuade their own public to accept it, and I am anxious to do my best to help them.

I am sorry that my colleagues appear to distrust me over this matter, and I am quite prepared to hand the matter over if they would rather someone else carried on the negotiations.

I have throughout told you that I would not agree [to] anything that was not satisfactory to Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy on the Defence question, but this you seem to doubt. Unless I am trusted I cannot carry on with the task.

70. Winston Churchill's Telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps Restraining Him Further and Asserting That His Job in India Was Not to Negotiate a New Proposal but to Try and Gain Acceptance for the Existing Proposal

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 721–2.

10 April 1942

.... There can be no question of want of confidence and we sympathize with you in your difficulties, but we have our responsibilities as well as you. We feel that in your natural desire to reach a settlement with Congress you may be drawn into positions far different from any the Cabinet and Ministers of Cabinet rank approved before you set forth.

The Viceroy has cabled us that while willing to help you in every way responsibility for any working difficulties does not rest with him. We have not heard a word from General Wavell. We do not know for instance whether the Viceroy and you propose that there should be no European on the Council except the Commander-in-Chief. We have been told nothing about the character and compositions of the new Council or National Government you think should be formed. We do not know whether the Home Department or Finance are to be placed in the hands of Congress nominees. We have not heard what personalities the Viceroy has in mind for submission to the King-Emperor. We have received no assurance that there is any acceptance by India as a whole or by any of the principal Parties of the declaration which we drew up together.

We are concerned about the Viceroy's position. You agreed with his definition of his powers ... (including retention of powers overriding the Executive Council) and we must definitely reject suggestion of a convention which would restrict them.

In your para 13 you speak of carrying on negotiations. It was certainly agreed between us all that there were not to be negotiations but that you were to try to gain acceptance with possibly minor variations or elaborations of our great offer which has made so powerful an impression here and throughout the United States. As a fair-minded man you will I am sure try to realise how difficult it is for us to see where our duty lies amid all these novel proposals and in the absence of clear and simple explanations.

71. Sir Stafford Cripps's Telegram to Winston Churchill Saying That the Real Difficulty Was Due to Internal Differences within Congress and That the AICC Meeting to Be Held on 29 April 1942 May Offer Some Hope As It Was a Larger and More Representative Body

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 740–41.

11 April 1942

You will have heard of the refusal of Congress upon what is almost a new point. But the difficulties cannot be explained by telegram.

We have done our best under the circumstances that exist here and I do not think you need worry about my visit having worsened the situation from the point of view of morale or public feeling. In the last few days the temper has I think been better.

My own view is that despite failure the atmosphere has improved quite definitely.

Nehru has come out in a fine statement for total war against the Japs; Jinnah has pledged me the unwavering support of the Muslims, and the Sikhs and other minorities will be on the whole relieved and I hope to some extent reassured. The real difficulty has been the internal stresses in Congress itself hence their long discussions and the veering of the indications of their decisions.

There is a chance if we handle the situation wisely and without recrimination the All-India Congress Committee ... may give an indication of a changing spirit as it is much more representative than the Working Committee.

We are not depressed though sad at the result. Now we must get on with the job of defending India. I will tell you as to this on my return.

All good wishes. Cheerioh. Stafford.

72. Broadcast by Sir Stafford Cripps on the Eve of His Departure
Defending the Proposals, Regretting the Failure of the Mission, and
Taking Responsibility For It

Why Cripps Failed, pp. 58–63.

11 April 1942

You will have heard that the Draft Declaration which I brought to India on behalf of the War Cabinet and which I explained to you the last time I spoke over the wireless has been rejected by your leaders. I am sad that this great opportunity of rallying India for her defence and her freedom has been missed. No one could have been more fully conscious than I of the great difficulties which history placed in the way of a settlement of relations between the British and Indian peoples and even more between the different communities in India.

The War Cabinet in sending me on this mission realised to the full that Indian opinion—though united in a desire for full self-government—was widely disunited as to the methods by which it should be attained. It was with these wide differences of view we had to deal and it would have been no use if we had closed our eyes to the hard realities of the situation.

In the past British Governments have been accused of using vague terms to cloak a lack of purpose; and when they stated that it must be left to the Indian communities to agree among themselves it has been said that this was only a device by which Great Britain might indefinitely retain its control over India. But Congress since the outbreak of war has repeatedly demanded two essentials as a basis for its support of the Allied effort in the war—first a declaration of Indian independence and, second, a Constituent Assembly to frame a new and free constitution for India.

Both of these demands find their place in the Draft Declaration. It was in the light of the demands and criticism of India's leaders that the War Cabinet drafted their Declaration with the object of convincing the Indian peoples and world public opinion of the sincerity of their desire to offer freedom to India at the earliest practicable moment.

To avoid complaints that had been made in the past they put out a clear and precise plan which would avoid all possibility of Indian self-government being held up by the views of some large section or community. But they left it open for Indian leaders to agree upon an alternative method if they wished.

Of course every individual and organisation would have liked the Draft Declaration to express his or their point of view, forgetting that if it did it would inevitably have been rejected by others.

The War Cabinet were thus in a position rather like an arbitrator who tries to arrange a fair compromise between conflicting points of view. They could not, however, without denying the very freedom which they were offering, impose a form of government upon the Indian peoples which they did not themselves freely choose.

Criticism has been showered on the scheme from all sides; parties and individuals vied with one another in a competition to discover the greatest number of defects. But in all this spate of criticism those vital parts of the document with which all agree have never been mentioned. Full and free self-government for India—that is its central feature.

This critical and unconstructive attitude, natural enough in the law courts or in the market place, is not the best way of arriving at a compromise, but compromise there must be if a strong and free India is to come into being.

Some day, somehow, the great communities and parties in India will have to agree upon a method of framing their new constitution.

I regret profoundly for the sake of India, for whom I have a deep and admiring friendship, that the opportunity now offered has not been accepted.

But all this concerns the future. The immediate difficulties have been as regards the present. First, there was difficulty as to defence. Upon that, the attitude of the British Government was very simple. For many decades the defence of India has been in charge of His Majesty's Government. That charge has been carried out for over 20 years by the Commander-in-Chief, who is also Defence Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

This led to an organisation which places control of the armed forces under a defence Secretariat headed by the Commander-in-Chief. The Army in India—containing British and Indian units—the Navy and Air Force all come under this supreme command.

The demand has been made that the defence of India should be placed in Indian hands. No one suggests that the Commander-in-Chief, as head of the armed forces, should be under the Indian Government but they say his functions as Defence Member should be transferred to an Indian.

This may sound simple—it would mean a long and difficult reorganization of the whole Defence Secretariat—an unscrambling of eggs scrambled many years ago—which would cause delay and confusion at the very moment when the enemy is at the gates and the maximum speed and efficiency are essential in defence. The duty of the British Government to defend India and our duty to our American allies, who are giving such valuable help, makes such a course impossible.

To show our complete sincerity and desire to give representative Indian Members on the Executive Council maximum power we offered to create a new War Department which would take over the governmental relations of the Commander-in-Chief's general headquarters and the Naval and Air headquarters and which would be in his charge as War Member, leaving the rest of defence—a Department with a number of most important functions added—to an Indian Defence Member.

This arrangement satisfied some of the parties but not Congress, who demanded a degree of control for the Indian Defence Member which might have greatly jeopardized the Allied war effort in India.

In the wider area of defence, which touches almost every Department of the Raj, administration would have been wholly under the control of representative Indians.

But none of these things were the real cause of the breakdown in the negotiations.

In their final letter addressed to me the Congress Working Committee stated that the temporary form of government envisaged during the war was not such as to enable them to join the Government. They have two suggestions to remedy the situation; first, an immediate change of constitution—a point raised at the last moment and one that everyone else admitted to be wholly impracticable while the war is proceeding; and, second, that they are prepared to enter a true National Government with a Cabinet of Indian leaders untrammelled by any control by the Viceroy or the British Cabinet.

Realise what this means. Government for an indefinite period by a set of persons nominated by Indian parties responsible to no Legislature or electorate, incapable of being changed and the majority of whom would be in a position to dominate large minorities.

It is easy to understand that the great minorities in India would never accept such a system. Nor could His Majesty's Government, who have given pledges to those minorities, consent to their being placed unprotected, while the existing constitution lasts, under simple and possibly inimical majority rule.

It would be a breach of all the pledges that we have given. Such a solution may sound simple and attractive to those who have no knowledge of the deep communal divisions in India, but it is in fact wholly impracticable and would never be accepted by very large sections of the Indian peoples. Congress suggested that without these changes they cannot give a lead to the Indian people.

The essential need of India today is for all the leaders of all the main parties and communities to come together in a single National Government. A scheme that attracts some and repels others, such as Congress has suggested, is of little value. Nor does the precise form matter so greatly. Inspiration and leadership are not to be found in form or conventions, they will be demonstrated by combined purpose and unity of action.

No constitution and no convention will work unless those who lead the people will come together with a common determination to make it work. Had the Congress leaders felt themselves able to join with other leaders who were willing, then indeed great work ought to have been accomplished.

One thing I must make clear. I alone in India carry the responsibility for what has been done, neither the Viceroy nor the Commander-in-Chief carries any responsibility for these negotiations. They have throughout done their utmost to help me and I express to them and many other willing helpers of all nationalities my most sincere thanks for the help. We have tried by the offer that I brought to help India along her road to victory and freedom. But, for the moment, past distrust has proved too strong to allow of present agreement. But in that failure to achieve immediate results there is no bitterness. Our effort has been genuine. No responsible Indian has questioned the sincerity of our main purpose—the complete freedom of India. Such an effort, inspired by goodwill and sincerity, will leave its mark upon the history of our relations, and will cast its beneficent light forward into the future. It will prove to have been a first step along the path of freedom for India and of friendship between our two countries.

We may differ now and in the future, but upon one thing we must all be agreed, that it cannot be reached through a fresh conquest of India by a power such as Japan that has shown itself brutal and intolerant to its own Asiatic sister nations.

It is only necessary to visit Formosa or the occupied parts of China—as I have done—to know that through a Japanese conquest, death, misery, and starvation will come. The widely advertised propaganda of the Japanese, painting themselves as the liberators of China, has resulted in nothing but untold suffering and tragedy for hundreds of thousands of honest and peaceful Chinese men, women and children. The same propaganda now being made to trick the Indian people into submission holds out for them no better prospect than the dire sufferings which have been inflicted upon their Chinese neighbours. The basic philosophy of the Japanese Fascists, as of their German counterparts, is that they, as a superior race, have the right to enslave all whom they can conquer. I have seen and heard of the exploits of the Nazis in Russia, in Poland, in Yugoslavia and in other Slav countries of Europe, and I know that none but the most diseased imagination could ever conjure up the ghastly and sadistic horrors which these barbarians have made a reality throughout every town and village in that vast area.

That human bestiality could sink so low as in the case of the Nazi hordes in Eastern Europe, and of their Japanese allies in China and other places, is an overwhelming tragedy for the world, and it is a tragedy that we and you and all the Allied Nations are determined to expunge from the pages of history, in the only way that we can by the decisive defeat of those responsible for this brutalization of humanity. No peoples with the culture of the Indians—a culture as old, as deep and as real as that of their Chinese neighbours—could ever stand by and tolerate these insults to their moral standards and to their common humanity. Whatever our past differences may have been, however great the political difficulties of solving our present problems may be, we can and must stand together to fight upon your fair Indian soil for the decencies of humanity and for the right to clean, honest and unbrutalized lives.

Our philosophies, our religions and our traditions differ widely, but in whatever form we may each worship our own conception of supreme power and absolute goodness, we, one and all, desire to see those ethical and moral standards which are implicit in our religion become the touchstone of our behavior in all the wide and human contacts which make up our day-to-day life.

And in this epic struggle for decent moral standards in the world we fight against the godless barbarism and bestiality of our enemies, but we do not fight alone. Russia, China, the United States of America, and all the Allied nations with their suffering peoples, stand beside us, a great company of gallant men and women who will give their all for those things which they know to be right and just. On the battlefields of Russia and China, in their cities and on their farms, millions of our fellow men and women have already given their lives that we might live.

To that great and gallant army of the heroic dead, we not only owe a debt of gratitude, but we acknowledge a duty and an obligation.

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield. To strive, to seek, to find that righteous victory which they died to win, and not to yield to that barbarous aggression against which they made their bodies a living wall of resistance.

It is true that millions have died in those countries, as others have died in the crowded streets of our English cities, in our ships upon the high seas and fighting in our armies on the land and in the air; but as each has fallen others have crowded forward to take the vacant place and countless millions are even now preparing to strengthen and reinforce the effort, to make victory sure.

The hour has struck when India herself is being driven inexorably by the aggression of Japan into the front line of defence in a war which now spreads its evil tentacles into nearly every country in the world.

India takes her place, and takes it proudly, beside the peoples of Russia, China and America as yet another vast continental area attacked by an unscrupulous and self-seeking foe.

We shall do our utmost, despite all our heavy commitments elsewhere, and the United States of America will lend her great and growing aid as well, to assist the Indians in the defence of their country. We ask them to help us as we seek to help them. Together we can do much, divided we can do far less.

Hard and difficult times surely lie ahead, the path of honour and of duty has never been an easy one, and today in those who would follow it to its end there must be found a greater courage and determination than ever before; but the end is certain as the slow wheels of justice grind our defeat for the aggressor nations.

The vast resources of manufacture of the United States, of Great Britain and of Russia, matched to the unlimited man-power of the Allied nations, can bring but one result—the final victory, even though it be delayed, and towards that victory India can and must play her part, a part that will give her the proud right to full and free representation in the council of the nations when they meet to make the final peace which can, if we will it, lead the peoples of the world into a brighter and happier future of organized and co-operative freedom.

As during all wars the tempo of historical development must be accelerated, so during this the greatest of all wars the speed of advance and the pressure of events will be greater than ever before. The common peoples of the world will have opportunities in the world resettlement such as they have never had before, and the Indian peoples and their leaders must make ready to play their full part in the building of the new world order.

Let us then put aside the discussions of the last month and let them take their ordered place in history, while we turn all our energies to the defence of India, the first step to building a new and free future for the Indian peoples.

This is the time when the youth of the world are called upon to make every sacrifice, to the ultimate sacrifice of life itself, but through that selfless service to humanity, they earn the right to take their full share in the shaping of the future. That future must inevitably be influenced by what is done during these anxious days and months of war. Though old heads may be wiser, old hearts cannot have the fire and courage of youth—it is that fire and courage which we must summon to the defence of India and to the building of her freedom when victory is won.

Risks must be taken, innovations must be tried, and we must climb quickly out of the ruts of peace-time habits and customs. A new tempo is needed, a new devotion, a more total effort to finish quickly with the horrors of war and reach that new and constructive era of our world civilization, upon which we all must concentrate our every energy, once the war is won.

I have seen that effort being made in the Soviet Union, the wholehearted devotion of an entire continent—more varied in radical origin than India itself—and the world has learnt what a great and courageous people inspired with the love of their country and of their freedom can achieve. I have witnessed too the Chinese—ill-equipped, lacking many essential supplies—indomitably carrying on their defence year after year and wearing down the aggressor who has penetrated deep into their homeland. The cities and towns of England have been deeply scarred and her people have suffered as none ever before from the concentrated hate of enemy bombing. Their courage and their fortitude have thrilled the world.

Now is the time for India and her people to join their courage, their strength and their endurance in this great heroic and worldwide army of the common people, and to take her part in those smashing blows for victory against brutality and aggression which shall for ever free the masses from the age-long fear and tragedy of poverty and of war.

73. Newspaper Report on Winston Churchill's Statement in the House of Commons on Cripps Mission, Replying to Questions from the Opposition, 13 April 1942

The Times of India, 14 April 1942.

Mr. Churchill dealt briefly with the Cripps Mission to India in the Commons today and suggested that it would be better to await the return of the Lord Privy Seal, who might be in a position to make a personal report to the House.

The Prime Minister said he would consider whether a White Paper could be published on the Indian negotiations.

'I take this opportunity, which I am sure the House will approve,' he added 'of saying how much we have admired the tenacity, ingenuity and patience with which Sir Stafford Cripps conducted these negotiations.' (Loud cheers).

'And although I have no doubt he feels stricken by a most cruel blow by the fact that success was not achieved, it does not in any way lessen the fact that we highly approve of his mission and of his conduct of those negotiations,' (Renewed cheers).

At the close of questions Mr. Greenwood (Labour) asked the Prime Minister, whether in view of the end of the discussions in India and the early return of the Lord Privy Seal, he could this week publish a White Paper and clear the ground for what the House would hope to be an early debate on the question after Lord Privy Seal had returned.

Mr. Churchill replied, 'It was thought convenient that I should deal with the several points raised in the course of the question hour by making a brief statement at the end of it in regard to the conversations in India and the mission of the Lord Privy Seal. It would, I think, be better to await the return of the Lord Privy Seal, who may be in a position to make a personal report to the House upon the very important mission with which he was charged. I will consider whether a White Paper can be published, although a great deal has been made public already by both parties to the negotiations.'

Facilitating Debate

Later during the questions period Mr. Greenwood returned to the subject of India saying, 'We have had no authoritative statement and I submit that the House really does not know what the proposals were which were made to the Indian representatives, nor do we know, nor are we in a position to analyse the causes of the breakdown.'

'Some of us feel that a White Paper, published before the debate, would clear the minds of the members and perhaps avoid a good deal of wasted discussion in the House. Would it not be better if the House had before it on a reasonable form an authoritative statement on the course of the discussions which have taken place?'

Replying, Mr. Churchill said, 'I am quite ready to see what papers can be collected. It would be convenient to have even papers that have already been published included in a comprehensive document. I will see what other material can be included, but I will have

naturally to refer by telegram to the Lord Privy Seal, who is on his way home, in order that he shall himself suggest points that he thinks of special importance.

‘I should feel, however, that if a White Paper were published it would be very much better to allow the Lord Privy Seal to state the position in his own words.’ (Cheers).

74. Secret Intelligence Report on C. Rajagopalachari’s Stand on the Cripps Proposals, 14 April 1942

F-221/42, GOI Home (Poll-I), NAI.

S.G.G. and Home Department may see the following report; it is interesting, although now perhaps of little more than academic importance:

‘From the very beginning C. Rajagopalachari informed the Congress Working Committee at Delhi, that it was no use prolonging negotiation with Cripps. The proposals should be accepted and worked out. The Gandhi Group never allowed him to see Cripps. According to Dr. Subbaroyan, the whole affair was sabotaged by the Gandhi Group. They made a fool of Jawaharlal who never knows his own mind, and is not prepared to oppose the wishes of the majority of the Working Committee for fear of losing popularity. Dr. Subbaroyan thinks that Jawaharlal’s love of popularity plays the most important part in his political life. The Gandhi Group had no intention of accepting the Cripps’ proposals.

‘Dr. Subbaroyan is a strong supporter of C. Rajagopalachari. He says that, even if the Axis Powers win, India will be better able to negotiate peace if she is at the helm of affairs, than if she is disarmed and helpless after a British withdrawal. He thinks that if the British should withdraw from a province or from the whole country, a Government manned by Indians would be able to keep law and order and, if necessary, carry on the administration under the Japanese. This would mean that there would be no break in the administration and no spell of anarchy and chaos. It is mainly for this reason that he supports Rajagopalachari.

‘In a private talk with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru C. Rajagopalachari said that if his resolution was accepted by the Congress it would be for the Muslim League to accept it. If the Muslim League accepted the resolution the British Government would be forced to transfer power completely. If it did not do so, it would be in the wrong. If, on the other hand, the Muslim League did not agree to accept it, the Muslim League would be in the wrong. In any case, the Congress, which is blamed all the world over for the failure, would be absolved, and the other parties would be blamed. Rajagopalachari further thinks that when the Congress sent their last letter to Cripps they thought that Cripps would still continue to negotiate. The breakdown came as an absolute surprise to the Congress Working Committee’.

75. Press Conference by Sir Stafford Cripps in London after His Return from India, Highlighting the Merits of the New Approach of Going to India with a Plan and Its Advantages, 22 April 1942

The Times of India, 23 April 1942.

‘I do not regard the problem of India as insoluble during the war,’ declared Sir Stafford Cripps at a Press conference in London today. ‘The approach has to come from India. It is impossible to frame a new constitution now.’

Sir Stafford Cripps thought that the discussions had impressed the Indian people and others with the sincerity of outlook of the British people and Government.

‘The most useful thing I think I can do is to give a short picture of what I think the net results of my mission have been,’ said Sir Stafford Cripps. ‘The first thing of importance is that the War Cabinet got out a precise and definite plan by which they hoped, in consultation with the leaders of Indian opinion, to be able to lay the basis for the eventual solution of the whole problem of our relationship with India, and in the meantime, enable leaders of Indian opinion to help in the very difficult task of organising defence.

‘The second point is that a new method of dealing with the negotiations was adopted on this occasion. Instead of trying to bring representative Indians to London, a member of the War Cabinet was sent to India in order to discuss with those representatives, on the spot, a plan which the War Cabinet hoped would be suitable, and to see if without the four corners of that plan sufficient accommodation could be arrived at to enable it to be generally acceptable.

‘It was fully realised that, with a plan of that kind, it would probably be either generally accepted, or generally turned down, because in the general state of opinion in India, it was not likely that any large body of opinion would accept the plan if the rest were going to reject it. There is always the danger that the one who accepts it might be held up as subservient to British imperialism if the majority of the people reject it.

Situation Clarified

‘Thirdly, I think the contacts that were established in India itself—have served to clarify the situation very considerably, clarify it, not only so far as India is concerned, by making clear beyond all possibility of doubt the attitude which Great Britain now adopts as regards the ultimate future of India after the war, but also to clarify it so far as this country, America and other countries are concerned.

‘And then, finally, I think that the result of the discussions there has been to impress the Indian people and others with the sincerity of the outlook of the British people and the British Government.

‘There will no doubt be a period during which a certain amount of recrimination may be voiced in India as regards the breakdown,’ declared Sir Stafford Cripps, proceeding, ‘Naturally, everybody who has taken part in the negotiations will wish to justify the position which they took up and will not want the blame for the breakdown to be placed on them.

‘Personally, I do not place the blame for the breakdown on anybody, but, as I said in India, if anybody is to accept responsibility for it I prefer to do that myself.

‘Historical considerations and past difficulties, I think, are largely responsible for the difficulties in the present of settling this problem. In some ways it was not a very auspicious moment for such a settlement. It is not easy to solve the Indian problem as one approaches its actual solution. It is not easy, either, suddenly to change an atmosphere which has been to a considerable extent distrustful into an atmosphere of complete trust, such as is required if one is going to have co-operation between different situation. All that is a legacy of the past, but unfortunately the past always throws its shadow on the present and the future.

‘If one can claim that to a certain extent that shadow has been dispelled. I think one can hope that at least some good has come out of the War Cabinet’s action. I am very anxious that there should be no atmosphere of recrimination at all.

‘I perfectly understand the difficulties which the leaders of different sections of Indian opinion have had. I perfectly understand all the things that stood in the way of a settlement,

both as regards the future and the present. We regret profoundly that those differences could not be overcome and I think that leaders of Indian opinion have done their utmost in order to overcome those differences.

Problem of Defence

‘We seemed at one time to get extremely close, but we did not get quite close enough in order to get what we wanted,’ said Sir Stafford Cripps. ‘The problem now becomes, not a political one, but the problem of the defence of India.’

‘In that I have had the assurance personally from many of the leaders that they are going to co-operate to their utmost to make their defence as effective as possible. I believe the result of these talks, when it comes in a question of defence, will be a good result.’

‘Although those leaders are not prepared at the present moment to partake of the reasonability of sharing in the Government of India, yet they will extend themselves in order to do anything they can to assist, in an unofficial capacity, in the defence of India.’

‘The picture, therefore, is not a gloomy picture, so far as I am concerned,’ declared Sir Stafford Cripps, concluding, ‘It is an encouraging picture, not as encouraging as it might have been, but much more encouraging than if nothing had been done.’

Sir Stafford Cripps was cordially cheered when he entered the House of Commons today for the first time since his return from India. He will now resume his position as Leader of the House of Commons.

C. CRIPPS PROPOSALS AND CONGRESS

76. Letter to Sir Stafford Cripps by Jawaharlal Nehru in His Capacity as the President, All India State People’s Conference, Asking Him to Treat the State People’s Conference and Not the Princes as the Real Representatives of the States’ People

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 181–3.

20 March 1942

Sir,

During your stay in India you will presumably consider the problem of the Indian states, and it has already been announced in the public press that representatives of the Narendra Mandal (the Chamber of Princes) will interview you and place their viewpoint before you. You will appreciate that this viewpoint is likely to be very different from and even entirely at variance with the viewpoint of the people living in these states.

Conditions vary greatly in these states. Some of them are extensive and well populated with considerable revenues, others are almost microscopic in size, population and revenues. Some again are relatively more advanced educationally and industrially, but the great majority of them are exceedingly backward in every respect. With hardly any exception, they are subjected to autocratic and personal rule, limited only by the intervention and more or less strict control of the Political Department of the Government of India. The people of the states have little or no voice in the governments, and civil liberty is often totally non-existent. For many years past agitation has been carried on in a large number of states for responsible government and

civil liberty, and this has frequently led to tragic incidents and cruel repression, in which the Government of India or their agents have taken part.

Though conditions differ in these states, the common objective of the people in all of them is full responsible government. In the larger states this responsible government may function under the aegis of the ruler who will be then a strictly constitutional head acting through his ministers who will be responsible to the assemblies elected by the people. Most of the smaller states are far too small to exist as independent units and must therefore be absorbed in larger units, preferably the provinces.

The demand of the people in the states is for a democratic form of government with exactly the same democratic liberties as exist, or should exist, in the rest of India. They look forward to a free, united and democratic India of which these states, if large enough, are constituent units, or are parts of constituent units.

The people of the states refuse to be bound by the provisions of antiquated treaties in the making of which they had no part. These treaties were made by representatives or military commanders of the East India Company with individual rulers or others in armed possession of various areas at the time, without any reference to or consideration of the people living in these areas. At the most they represented a military and political adjustment of conditions as they existed a century and a quarter ago. These conditions have long ceased to exist in India elsewhere, and it is manifestly absurd to attach any importance to the treaties which have petrified those conditions for so long, to the great detriment of the people.

It has been repeatedly stated by those in authority that any future order must be based on democratic freedom. That democratic freedom must necessarily apply to the Indian states. Far-seeing statesmen have also emphasized the necessity of planning for industrial and social progress. Any planning in India would be impossible if the Indian states were left out of it and remained, as they are, relics and enclaves of a completely out-of-date, autocratic and semi-feudal world. In the interests therefore not only of the people of the states, but also of Indian freedom and world freedom and planning, it is essential that the Indian states system should be liquidated and be replaced by free and democratic units of a free India.

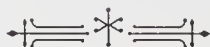
I have endeavoured to place before you briefly the viewpoint of the people of the states as represented by the All India States People's Conference, of which I have the honour to be President. The particular point I wish to make at this stage is that it would be wrong to regard the princes as representatives of the people in their states, and that the representatives of the people of the states should have an effective voice in the disposal of their own destiny.

In case you desire to have any further information on this subject, I would request you to communicate with the General Secretary, All India States People's Conference, Wardha, C.P. Should you visit to meet a representative of our Conference in order to discuss these problems, our Vice-President, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, has kindly agreed, at my request, to place himself at your disposal. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's address is Masulipatnam, South India.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

President, All India States People's Conference



77. Statement by Jagjiwan Ram, President, All India Depressed Classes League, Making an Appeal to Sir Stafford Cripps to Treat the Depressed Classes League as the Representative Body of the Depressed Classes

Amrira Bazar Patrika, 23 March 1942.

21 March 1942

Mr. Jag Jiwan Ram, M.L.A., President, All-India Depressed Classes League has issued the following statement:-

‘Sir Stafford Cripps is reaching India in a day or two to hold consultations with the leaders of the various elements in India’s political life with a view to solve the constitutional deadlock and thereby create conditions necessary for India’s more effective participation in its defence. Invitations have already been issued by H. E. the Viceroy to a number of organisations and leaders to see Sir Stafford Cripps. It is rather surprising that the Depressed Classes have been ignored and the only representative organisation of the Depressed Classes—the All-India Depressed Classes League—do not find any place in the list of the invitees.

‘Though Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. M.C. Raja have been invited, it has been announced that they have been invited in their personal capacity and not as representatives of the Depressed Classes. Moreover Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Raja do not and cannot claim to represent the vast number of the Depressed Classes. At the most they represent only a microscopic minority among the Depressed Classes. There is a large number of Depressed Class leaders who fundamentally differ from both of them regarding the arrangement of safeguarding the rights and interest of the Depressed Classes and also the method of their representation on elective bodies. This majority has organised itself into the All-India Depressed Classes League which has been functioning since 1934. It has got Provincial branches in seven major Provinces and district branches in all the districts of the Punjab, U.P., Bihar and C P. It claims to have a large number of members whose representative character is unquestionable as they are members of provincial legislatures, District Boards and Municipal Bodies. While safeguarding the interest of the Depressed Classes, it stands for the development of a healthy nationalism and for the solidarity of the Hindu Society. The 8th All-India Depressed Classes League Conference was held in February last at Meerut and was attended by the representatives from practically all the provinces.

‘There is no gainsaying that the Depressed Classes are a distinct entity in India’s political life and no constitutional settlement in which the Depressed Classes League representing the entire Depressed Classes has no voice can come to be an agreed one. As the All-India Depressed Classes League is the most representative organisation of the Depressed Classes Sir Stafford Cripps cannot afford to ignore it if he really means to evolve an agreed formula for solving the constitutional deadlock at this critical juncture in the History of the British Empire.’

78. Notes of Sir Stafford Cripps’s First Interview with Maulana Azad Discussing the Draft Proposal

TOP, Vol. 1, p. 479.

25 March 1942

I read the document slowly through asking for any interruption upon points that did not seem too clear or satisfactory but I was not stopped until document was completed and the only points

which seemed to interest him at all were those concerning the immediate steps in paragraph (e). He at once fixed upon the question of Defence and stated that, according to Congress view, it was necessary, in order to mobilise effectively the forces of the Indian people, to give the Indians the control of the defence of their country. I pointed out to him that strategically India had to be regarded as a part of a much greater theatre of war and that the decision on what troops, air forces and naval vessels were available for use in India and how best they could be used could only be made by the War Cabinet in London in the light of considerations affecting England itself, the Middle East, the Caspian front, Africa, Ceylon, Burma and other places in addition to India; that supplies could only be made available for India at the cost of other theatres and that therefore the British Government, if it was to carry the responsibility for the defence of India, must retain all control of Indian defence in its own hands, that the way in which India could participate in this was by the appointment of a representative to the British War Cabinet, where he would have the same position as the Australian representative who was now functioning. Upon this Azad reiterated his point of view as regards mobilising defensive power in India and the need for some great gesture such as the Indianisation of the Defence Ministry, though he was prepared to admit that in matters of strategy it would be wrong for any Indian Defence Minister to attempt to interfere with Commander-in-Chief.

My general impression was that Congress wanted the appearance and name of an Indian Defence Minister while at the same time realising that he could not take any effective part in ordering the movement of troops or other military arrangements. Apart from this one point, I asked him whether he could suggest any other way in which we could have demonstrated more decisively our intention to give India full self-government at the earliest possible moment. He had no further suggestion to make. He promised to report to the Working Committee which would be coming to Delhi and to see me as soon as he had consulted them. I told him I would like to see Nehru and also that I had arranged to see Gandhi. He was extremely friendly throughout and left me in a very good humour.

79. Broadcast by Subhash Chandra Bose from Azad Hind Radio on the Cripps Mission, Stating That There Was No Difference between a Conservative and a Labourite as Far as the Indian Question Was Concerned

S.A. Ayer (ed.), *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Publication Division, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 120–3.

25 March 1942

.... I have considered very carefully the offer of the British Government to India and the radio speech of Sir Stafford Cripps in that connection. I feel perfectly convinced that it is now quite clear that Sir Stafford has gone to India to try the age-long policy of British imperialism—‘divide and rule’. Many people in India did not expect Sir Stafford Cripps to play a role which might very well have been reserved for a Conservative politician like Mr. Amery. Sir Stafford Cripps has himself assured us that the terms offered to India are, in his opinion, the soundest and the best, and that the members of the British Cabinet were all unanimous over these proposals.

This affords one further proof that, in Britain, all party differences disappear when the question of India comes up. Sir Stafford has told us that India is a sub-continent inhabited by

many races and peoples. I would like to remind him that India was unified under the empire of Asoka the Great, several centuries before the Christian era—more than 1,000 years before England was unified.

Britain has, in other parts of her Empire, for instance in Ireland and Palestine, used the religious issue in order to divide the people. She has been utilizing in India for that same purpose not only this issue but other imperial weapons like the Indian Princes, Depressed Classes etc. Now Sir Stafford is in India to use the same instruments for imperialistic ends. It is no less striking that Sir Stafford is applying the old imperialist policy of working for a compromise with one section of the people while simultaneously suppressing the other. That is why on the one side Sir Stafford is conferring with one set of politicians, while on the other the fearless and uncompromising fighters for independence are safely lodged behind prison bars. The Indian people are fully aware of this nefarious policy of British politicians. I have no doubt that the spirit of our freedom-fighters will hurl down the prison walls and inspire the people of India to know that this is an insult to India's self-respect and honour.

As the London paper, the *Daily Telegraph* has remarked, Sir Stafford's proposals contain nothing that is fundamentally new. The essence is Dominion Status within the Empire, which will be realized only when the war is over. But according to the terms of the offer, the speech of Sir Stafford Cripps, and the comments of English papers like the *Manchester Guardian*, it is quite clear that the real intention of the British Government is to split India into a number of States, just as Ireland was split up at the end of the last war. I am doubtful whether India will even look at such an offer. Indians are by nature hospitable, and Sir Stafford will be committing a grievous mistake if he interpreted such hospitality to mean the acceptance of his offer.

Sir Stafford reached the height of imperialist hypocrisy when, at a press conference at Delhi, he remarked that Indians have not been able to produce an agreed constitution. But the Indian people know from their bitter experience that only the British Government is responsible for the corruption and bribery in India. The Indian people are, therefore, convinced that they can no longer hope to win their freedom by discussion or argument, propaganda and passive resistance, but must now resort to other methods that are more effective and powerful.

Sir Stafford also mentioned that while the war is going on, a new constitution cannot be framed for India, and hence the inauguration of Dominion Status will begin on the termination of the war. I may remind Sir Stafford Cripps that, as early as October 1939, I replied to the British Government by suggesting that a Provisional National Government, commanding the confidence of the majority of the people, should be set up at once. This Provisional National Government could be made responsible to the present Indian Legislative Assembly. In other words, the Provisional National Government could be made responsible to the elected members of the Indian Assembly. This suggestion was first of all put forward by me on behalf of the Forward Bloc of the Congress, and it being practicable and reasonable, the official Congress Committee also adopted it as their own demand. The fact, however, is that the British Government is not ready to part with power at the present moment. By raising the issue of the minorities or of the Princes or of the so-called Depressed Classes, they can at any time find a plea that Indians are not united. Sir Stafford must be living in a fool's paradise if he thinks that, by making such hopeless offers, he can satisfy India's hunger for freedom. In the last World War, with the help of India, the war was won by England but India's reward was further suppression and massacre. India has not forgotten those episodes and she will see that the present golden opportunity is not lost.

Since the beginning of this century, the British Government has been using another organization as a counterblast to the Congress in order to reject its demands. It has been using the Muslim League for this purpose, because that party is regarded as pro-British in its outlook. In fact, British propaganda has tried to create the impression that the Muslim League is almost as influential a body as the Congress, and that it represents the majority of India's Muslims. This, however, is far from the truth. In reality there are several influential and important Muslim organizations which are thoroughly nationalist. Moreover, of the 11 provinces in British India, out of which only four have a majority of Muslims, only one, the Punjab, has a Cabinet which may be regarded as Muslim League Cabinet. But even the Punjab Premier is strongly opposed to the main programme of the Muslim League, namely the division of India. But even then it is said that the majority of the Muslims will not stand for Indian independence.

As far as the defence of India is concerned, it is stated in the British proposals that, so long as the war lasts, the full military control of India will be directly in the hands of Britain, not even in the hands of the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief in India. By this policy, Britain wants to achieve a two-fold purpose. She desires, on the one hand, to utilize to the fullest extent India's resources for the whole Empire, and, on the other, to force thereby the enemies of Britain to attack Britain's military base in India, so that the Indian people may be provoked into voluntarily entering the war as Britain's ally. I would like to affirm, with all the emphasis at my command, that all the pro-British Indians who are participating in Britain's war will alone be responsible if the war comes ultimately to India. I would like further to warn my countrymen that Britain's sole object now is to drag the Indian people into the war. It has been a successful game of the British people to get other nations involved in the war. Up to the present time they have been carrying out glorious retreats and successful evacuations. Recently they have adopted a novel policy of burning and destroying everything before taking to their heels. If the British Government apply these scorched earth tactics to their own country, that is no concern of ours. But I have every reason to believe that they have decided to apply these scorched-earth tactics in Ceylon and India, should the war come there. Therefore, participation in Britain's war will not only hinder Britain's defeat and overthrow, but will also delay the attainment of independence for Indians.

80. M.K. Gandhi's Telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps regarding a Meeting between Them

CWMG, Vol. 75, p. 428.

25 March 1942

THANKS FOR YOUR WIRE. I WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE. IT WAS AGREED THAT ON BEHALF OF THE CONGRESS ONLY THE PRESIDENT AND PANDIT NEHRU SHOULD SEE YOU. YOU KNOW MY ANTI-ALL-WAR VIEWS. IF DESPITE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ME I SHALL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU.



81. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with
M.K. Gandhi, Mentioning Gandhi's Reservations on
Three Issues—Representatives from States Being Nominated
Rather than Elected, the Option of Secession for the Provinces,
and the Question of Defence

CWMG, Vol. 75, Appendix VII, pp. 458–60.

27 March 1942

I gave Mr. Gandhi the document to read after a few short introductory remarks, and he impressed upon me that he had not, of course, anything to do with Congress officially and that any views he expressed would not necessarily be those of the Congress. In the first instance he expressed the very definite view that Congress would not accept the document, basing this upon two main points—firstly, the paragraph dealing with the Indian States, secondly, that dealing with accession or non-accession of Provinces. Curiously enough, he also, in rather a vague way, questioned the point as regards the retention of Defence in the British hands.

So far as the Indian States point was concerned, he stated that Congress took the view that they could not tolerate the continuance of those autocratic States under the aegis of the British Government with the right to call upon the British armed forces to enforce the arbitrary power of their rulers. He elaborated a number of instances of the arbitrary action of the rulers against the States' peoples and suggested that the document envisaged the continuance in perpetuity of such a regime in the case of those States that did not actually come into the new Indian Union. I pointed out that this was not so, but that the first basis for any reform in State administration was the setting up of an independent British India which by its influence and its economic power would inevitably set up a movement of democratization in the States, immediately in so far as they came into the new Indian Union and more gradually so far as those that stayed out were concerned; that beyond this the question was an administrative one and that I was certain once the new basis was laid down for British India that it would be the object of the British administration to encourage the States in the direction of a greater amount of democratic government in order that they might more easily associate themselves with British India. I asked him what his solution was, whether he suggested that we should immediately force all the States into the Indian Union; and he replied that he was against any such idea, he would like to see them all converted immediately into independent States having no reliance upon the paramountcy of the British Government as he felt certain that this would accelerate a movement for power by the States' peoples. He did not wish to see the States' rulers disappear immediately but he wished them to convert their States, in the case of the larger ones into constitutional democracies, while the smaller States would have to be absorbed into the larger ones or into the Indian Union. After a very lengthy argument on this subject, he seemed inclined rather to moderate his view as to the difficulties raised by the document in this relation, though he did not withdraw it.

As regards the second point, he started by asserting that the document was an invitation to the Moslems to create a Pakistan. He acknowledged the great influence of Jinnah and that the movement for Pakistan had grown tremendously in volume during the last two years, though he was inclined to agree, when I expressed a doubt as to whether, when it came to the question of practical application, there would be as much support for the Pakistan idea as there was at the present time. I went through the document with him, pointing out that it was primarily

based upon the conception of a united India and that it was only in the case of Congress being unable to come to an agreement with the Moslems in the Constitution-making body that any question of non-accession would arise. I told him that I had always understood the attitude of Congress was that, once the British Government were out of the way, as they would be in the Constitution-making body, it would be possible for the Congress and Moslems to come to an agreement. I also stressed my belief that agreement was more likely if we did not force the Moslems in but gave them the option of not coming in if they so desired when negotiations had been tried over the Constitution-making period. Again, after very lengthy discussion, he seemed to be rather less certain of the antagonism of Congress on this point.

I then asked him frankly as a friend and not as a member of the Congress working Committee or as the direct adviser of Congress to tell me what he thought was the best method of proceeding. He said he thought it would have been better if I had not come to India with a cut and dried scheme to impose upon the Indians, but when I reminded him that the first time I had met him he had told me that once it was made absolutely clear that India would achieve self-government on some ascertained date, what happened in the intervening period was of comparatively small importance, he seemed inclined to accept the view that this document was merely a finalizing of the date and of the method which might be adopted pending the agreement of the parties upon any other or better one. He accepted, I think, this approach to the document and then said that he thought it was extremely inadvisable to have the document published in any way whatsoever unless first agreement had been obtained from both the major communities. I told him that the intention was that it should be published on Monday and he asked me many times to see that it was not so published. He asked me what Jinnah's views were as to publication. I told him that he had suggested that, in view of the danger of leakage, it would be wise to publish it before too long; and he interpreted this as being an indication that Jinnah would accept the scheme. I rather formed the view myself that the desire he expressed that it should not be published was because he was afraid of the pressure of public opinion upon Congress to accept the scheme against, perhaps, their wishes, and as to some extent depriving them of an opportunity of bargaining for a better position.

I then asked him how, supposing Jinnah were to accept the scheme and Congress were not to, he would himself advise me to proceed. He said that in these circumstances the proper course would be for me to throw the responsibility upon Jinnah and tell him that he must now try to get Congress in either by negotiating direct with them or by meeting them in association with myself. He thought that if it was pointed out to Jinnah what a very great position this would give him in India if he succeeded, that he might take on the job and that he might succeed. Similarly, if Congress accepted and Jinnah refused, he thought the onus should be thrown upon Congress to get in Jinnah. I told him quite definitely that I should have to make up my mind as regards acceptance or not within the next few days and that, if this scheme was not accepted, there would be no question of any other scheme, anyway before the end of the war, and that those people who had taken the Congress point of view in the past, like myself, would not be in a position to exercise further influence in England as regards the solution of the Indian problem, as it would generally be thought that this offer was one which Congress should have accepted and that it was no good making any further offer until the Moslems and Hindus agreed. He expressed, I think quite sincerely, his hopes that I should succeed in spite of what he had said, but more I think, as a personal matter as an indication that he wanted the scheme to go through.

He stated that he would be remaining in Delhi until Sunday night as the Working Committee was meeting tomorrow, and that he would be most willing to come and see me again at any time I liked if I thought it would be of any assistance. I thanked him and indicated that I would either come and see him or ask him to come and see me some time on Sunday.

82. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, Stating His Strong Reservations on the Proposals
CWMG, Vol. 75, p. 440.

(After 27 March 1942)

Chi. Jawaharlal,

.... Today I woke up at two. I was thinking of you and Rajaji only. I am clearly of the view that we cannot accept this 'offer'. If you also agree, then talk to Rajaji and reach a final decision. If you are inclined to agree with Rajaji then the matter deserves further consideration.

83. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to Eva Curie, Sharing His Impressions on the Proposals, and on the War
CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 440-1.

Before 29 March 1942

Miss Curie's question was direct—on the present situation. She admired the sincerity with which Sir Stafford Cripps was trying to bring about a settlement, and she wanted to know Gandhiji's reaction to his efforts.

Mahatma Gandhi (hereafter MG): Sir Stafford is a very good man, but he has entered bad machinery—British Imperialism. He hopes to improve that machinery, but in the end it will be the machinery that will get the better of him.

Eva Curie: Axis Powers' triumph would bring India to a fate comparable to that inflicted on Poland and France. That is why the average citizen of conquered countries puts his belief and hope in Allied victory.

MG: India can win her laurels only through non-violence. What we have achieved during the last twenty years shows what immense results could be obtained if the principle of non-violence was generally practiced by our people.

Eva Curie: But Indians will have a tougher time opposing by non-violence German and Japanese divisions than undermining British rule.

MG: Quite possible. But this is the hour to live up to our faith. If the Japanese invaded India, I would not encourage our people to fight with arms. Neither would I suffer them to make a pact with aggressors.

Our struggle will be hard, but it will bring out the best in us.

Eva Curie: So you accept the idea of India refusing to fight or even to be defended by others.

MG: It is physically impossible to transform India suddenly into an armed nation. To give our people weapons and to teach them non-violence are two different methods of making them strong. Both take time. I simply believe that my method is surer, more precise, and in

the long run more successful. In order to beat the Japanese and German armies by force, you must become stronger than they are, and therefore worse and more ruthless. Then what have you won? Nothing. On the contrary, nations fighting with non-violence are unconquerable, for their strength does not depend on the number of rifles and machine-guns they possess. And when the method is good, there is no need to worry about immediate results. Success is bound to come in the end. In a non-violent struggle there are two alternatives: either the enemy comes to terms with you, then you win without blood; or the enemy annihilates you. This last solution is not worse than what a violent war in any case brings about. I don't blame you for wanting to liberate France just as I want to see India free; but it is a sign of too great impatience to think that any country can really be liberated by use of arms.

84. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with C. Rajagopalachari, Mentioning Latter's Suggestions So as to Make the Proposals Acceptable to Jawaharlal Nehru
TOP, Vol. 1, pp. 511-12.

28 March 1942

I had an extremely interesting and very instructive talk. He had not actually seen the document, except for a moment before he came, nor was he prepared to deal, with any part of it in detail as he was not authorised to present the Congress point of view. But in fact he pointed out to me the portions of the document which were likely to be picked upon by Congress. The first was the use of the word 'Dominion', and he suggested that if we could use the words 'Free Member State' instead of 'Dominion' it would be an advantage. Secondly he dealt with the right of non-accession, though he did not stress this so strongly as the third point, which was the question of Defence. I pointed out to him that the document must be accepted or rejected as a whole so far as the fundamentals were concerned and that he must bear in mind what the alternative to it was, that is to say, the continuance of the present state of affairs at least for the period of the war, and perhaps for an indefinite period afterwards, which would certainly militate seriously against the effectiveness of the defence of India. He stressed very strongly his own view that everything possible must be done to defend India and that it was essential that the Indian Leaders should be able to give some clarion call to the Indians which would stimulate them from their present defeatist attitude and it was as part of this argument that he put forward suggestions that something should be done as regards the redrafting of the last paragraph in order to make it clear that the Indian people were asked to defend their own country and that it was not merely the obligation of the British Government, and he associated with this the recommendation that something should be done about an Indian Defence Minister if we hoped to get the consent of Congress to the document. So far as the whole scheme was concerned, he said that he was in favour of its acceptance and that the crucial question would be whether Nehru could be got to take the same point of view; if he could, he had no doubt that they would carry the scheme through the Congress Working Committee. He begged of me to try and make some adjustment of the final paragraph in order to meet what he knew would be Nehru's reaction.



85. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Maulana Azad, Forming the Impression That the Question of Defence Was More Crucial for Congress Than the Non-accession Clause

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 514–15.

28 March 1942

He came back with a view to raising with me further explanatory points prior to the meeting of the Congress Working Committee tomorrow afternoon. He was depressed at the apparent cheerfulness of the Muslim league and at first raised again the question of the right of non-accession but very quickly gave up the argument upon that, stating that it was not nearly so important as the other point which he had to raise which related to the Defence minister. For over an hour and a half we argued upon this point exploring it from all angles and I constantly impressed upon him that the alternative to the acceptance of our scheme was not that they would have an Indian Minister, or any other advantages of the scheme, but that matters would remain precisely as they are to-day until after the war and possibly a good deal longer. Also, if this scheme was not accepted, they would find that those who had been their best friends in British political circles in the past were no longer able to do anything to assist them towards the aims which they had. After a very great deal of arguing he practically admitted that it was not possible to expect British units of any kind to be submitted to the political control of an Indian Minister. As I pointed out to him, such a conception was contrary to every kind of international practice in these matters, instancing that, when we sent naval units and air force units to Russia, no one ever suggested that they should be subjected to Russian political control; though operationally they might be under Russian officers, their movements could only be decided upon and controlled by the British Government. He then asked could there not be Indian control of the Indian Army. I pointed out that to have two staffs, two commanders-in-chief and two armies in India under separate control, one from the War Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff, and the other from the Defence Minister, would make for maximum inefficiency in the defence of India even if it were otherwise practical.

I stressed that this was not a question of denying the Indians some element of freedom because we did not trust them but was a technical matter upon which we had decided for the sole purpose of making as effective as possible the defence of India by British and Indian units together. I do not think that he was convinced though he was considerably shaken when he left me. He stated that he had one or two further points to raise, but that he would raise them tomorrow.

86. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Congress Leaders—Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, M.K. Gandhi, G.B. Pant, and B.G. Kher at Birla House

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 527–9.

29 March 1942

Jawaharlal Nehru came to breakfast and I was glad to find that he met me in the same completely friendly atmosphere in which we had last parted, and after some general and family conversation we talked on some of the major points of the document, and he stated that he

had had no conversations with his Congress colleagues yet because he had only just seen the document at Allahabad and had then to go into strict isolation in bed for two days to try and get over his fever and had seen no one.

I stressed to him the need of using this opportunity to arrive at a settlement and my impression was that, in his present frame of mind, the only real difficulty that would emerge would be that relating to the immediate state of affairs and the allocation of the Defence Ministry. We only had time to explore this in a very cursory way, and I then went with him to Birla House, where there was a great gathering of Congress people, and was met by Maulana Azad, who took me and Nehru straight along to see Mahatma Gandhi. I did not repeat or discuss any of the problems with Mr. Gandhi, we merely had a rather general conversation and he said he had nothing more to add. He thanked me for my letter about publication and said he quite understood that it could not now be put off but that he thought it was unfortunate in the circumstances. He then suggested that I should take the opportunity of seeing Kher and Pant as they were both there, and I went off into another room with them and we had an hour and a half's conversation.

First of all it turned upon the question of non-accession and it was entirely Pant who put forward the arguments, though they both intimated that they had no sort of authority to speak on behalf of the Working Committee. He was quite persistent in trying to convince me that it was undesirable to encourage, as this document he thought would do, the non-acceding desires of the Muslim League, but I pointed out to him that, whatever the ideal solution might be, my task was to create a solution between the Muslim League and Congress, and that this could not be done without doing something to meet the Muslim League view. I told him, as I had told Nehru, that I understood that the Congress leaders had stated they did not wish to rule out the Pakistan idea, and that all our scheme was doing was to leave it as a possibility, and I felt therefore it was difficult for them to object on that ground. I think that by the end of the argument on this point, both Pant and Kher began to see that as a compromise there was something to be said for the scheme as we put it forward.

He also raised the question of the Indian States and the desirability for our handing over paramountcy to the new Indian Union. I pointed out to him that this could not be done, except by the consent of the States, without a breach of our treaty obligations and we did not propose to commit such breaches; and that I took the same view as had been expressed by Mr. Gandhi the other day to me, that it was impossible to force the States into the Union if they did not wish to go, and that we must rely upon the pressure of the example of self-government in the Indian Union to develop the democratization of the States and gradually bring them into the Union.

Kher then raised the question of the Defence Ministry and we had a long three sided argument as to the practicability of this. I pointed out that it was not a question of whether we trusted or did not trust the Indians to control their own defence but that it was a question of the technical efficiency of the defence of India and it was impossible at the last moment, when an attack might come any day, to enter upon the task of transferring the defence from its present control to Indian control. I stated that none of the British officers at present in command would be prepared to work under the new system because they would feel that they could not carry out effectively their duties, and also that a change-over would create such disorganization that it would militate against the effectiveness of defence over the vital period of three or four months which was ensuing. By the end of the argument they both admitted that in practice the strategic and tactical disposition of all fighting units must remain under the effective control of the Commander-in-Chief, subject to the Chiefs of Staff and the War Cabinet, but they still

urged that there were many other Defence matters which could be handled by an Indian, and stated that they did not think they could rouse the country to its self-defence unless they could point out that the Indians themselves were responsible for their own defence. I stressed the fact that the ultimate control was in the War Cabinet and that we were asking the Indians to participate full in this control through their representative on the War Cabinet; and that the Government of India would of course be fully able to advance its views and tender its advice and any such views or advice would be most seriously considered, but that upon the question of the ultimate controlling power there could be no question but that this must reside in the War Cabinet and nowhere else. They were not satisfied with these arguments but I think they realised the force of them and quite frankly were trying to face up to the difficulties of combining an actual British control of the Defence forces and a publicly acknowledged position in which an Indian Member could really lead the Indian people to their defence. I suggested to them that I might be rather altering the words of the last clause—I was not yet certain—and that the alteration might put the situation in a manner which would help them in making their appeal to the Indian people.

87. Notes of Sir Stafford Cripps's Interview with Bhulabhai Desai on the Four Main Objections to the Proposals—Use of the Word 'Dominion', Position of Indian States, Non-accession Provisions, and the Defence Ministry

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 556–7.

30 March 1942

He was extremely friendly and obviously most anxious to do his utmost to bring about an acceptance of the scheme by the Congress Working Committee. He really came for the purpose of getting from me the best ammunition that he could for answering the objections which were being raised in the Working Committee to the scheme. These were the same four that had been often mentioned before, use of the word 'Dominion', the position of the Indian States, and non-accession of the Provinces and the Defence Ministry. I repeated to him all my arguments as regards these four points and stressed very strongly the dangers of the alternatives which would arise if the scheme were not accepted. He was fully conscious to these and was, I am certain, prepared to do his utmost to get the acceptance of the scheme by the Working Committee.

88. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, Giving Them His Views on All the Four Contentious Issues—the Word 'Dominion', Non-accession to the Provinces, States' Representation, and the Question of Defence, 29 March 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 183–5.

I had about two hours with these two and started by giving them the new altered draft in its final form and then explained to Nehru the general picture which I had given to Maulana Azad the last time I saw him. The four points that were raised were, first, the use of the word 'Dominion'. I pointed out that this was not a question of substance but of phraseology and I

gave the reasons why it had been put in, in order to stop objection by the House of Commons or the other Dominions. I think they attached psychological importance to this but it was in no sense a major point.

They then went on to the question of the Indian states and the representation by the states peoples. I repeated the arguments I had used to Mr. Gandhi and to Maulana Azad on a former occasion and said that if they wanted these states to come in, as apparently they did, this was the only way of inducing them.

They then passed to the non-accession point. I explained the method of deciding this in those cases where there was a 40% or more minority of the accession vote in the legislatures, that it would be referred to a plebiscite of the total adult male population. This method they seemed to accept. On the major point we had a long argument as to what the effect of the grant of the act was likely to be, and I pointed out that Nehru and other Congress leaders had said they were prepared to envisage the possibility of Pakistan and that was all the scheme was doing. They then said that they thought a scheme by which the Muslim provinces could secede after five to ten years was one that might be acceptable, and I replied that this would be a far more disruptive method of deciding the matter than doing it in the making of the constitution, and finally the argument was reduced to which was the better method of allowing for some form of non-accession or secession, which I pointed out was essential in order to get the Muslims to agree.

We then went to the final point as regards Defence. The altered text¹ seemed somewhat to improve the position but we went through all the same arguments again and I think I convinced them of the non-practicability of an Indian Defence Minister in the usual sense of the word.

The general attitude of Nehru, who was tired and not well, was mild and conciliatory and he left me in complete doubt as to whether Congress was more or less decided not to accept it and that it was not worth arguing or pressing for any alteration or whether he was not inclined to press his particular objections in view of the general character of the scheme and its grant of free self-government in India.

¹ For the altered text of the declaration see ante, f.n. 2. Before amendment paragraph (e) of the draft declaration had read: '[W]hile during the crucial period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be formed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India, they desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is essential for the future freedom of India.' This was amended on the recommendation of Cripps and approved by the War Cabinet on 29 March 1942.

89. Sir Stafford Cripps's Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal Nehru, Nehru's Anxiety over the Deteriorating Situation Due to Refugees, Growing Unemployment and Food Shortage, and Nehru's Impression That the CWC Would Not Accept the Proposals
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 185–6.

30 March 1942

Nehru came and had dinner with me and afterwards we talked for over two hours. I have never known him more serious and more worried about the Indian situation, and he was very fully conscious of the acute dangers that would arise if the Indian leaders were not to participate at

the present time in the rallying of India to her own defence, but he stressed the very dangerous state of opinion arising from a multitude of causes all of which had exacerbated Indian opinion against the British. The principal of these were, one, the treatment of Indian refugees coming from the eastern seaboard to the central districts in comparison to the treatment of the European refugees. Secondly, the growing unemployment in certain industries such as the weavers at Benares, where there was no alternative occupation either to maintain the population or to keep it quiet and orderly. Thirdly, the difficulties as to food distribution and shortage of wheat associated with rumours that we had sent Indian wheat to Persia. Fourthly, the growing disbelief in the capacity of Great Britain to make any defence effective in the light of the happenings in Malaya and Singapore, with the consequent lack of respect for police and others in India whose power had in the past depended largely upon the uniform that they wore. Fifthly, the tendency for a reversion to sympathy for Japan which had been demonstrated widely during the Russo-Japanese war on the ground of fellow Asiatic nations, though this was moderated by the pro-Chinese feeling in India. He was afraid that these various factors would make a for a general breakdown of administration and internal trouble on too large a scale to be held by British forces at the same time as they were holding the Japanese back.

He then told me of the difficulties in the Congress Working Committee and conveyed to me the impression that they would not accept the proposals, largely, I think, though he did not say so precisely, due to the influence of Gandhi. I gathered that he was doing his utmost to gain support for acceptance but felt that he was fighting a losing battle. We discussed shortly again the various points of difficulty but my general impression was that it was not so much the actual point of difficulty as the non-violence outlook of Gandhi and his supporters on that line, which obviously is opposed to the idea of mobilizing effectively the armed defence of India; and I feel fairly certain it is this aspect pointing to the undesirability of Congress leaders associating themselves in any way with the war effort which will be the decisive factor in the situation rather than any particular provision of the scheme itself. I naturally stressed to him again the hopelessness of the situation if nothing was now done and that the Congress and other nationalistic movements would lose all the support of sympathizers in other countries, anyway for the immediate present.

90. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Discussing the Democratization of the States and the Future of Small States

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 578–9.

31 March 1942

He dealt with the question of the States peoples and emphasised his horror and disgust at the omission of any consideration of the States peoples in the document. He recounted to me their present position and suggested that the British Government ought to insist upon the States democratizing their constitutions at the same time the promise of freedom was given to British India. I pointed out that it was impossible to do otherwise than deal with the Sates as they existed today whatever the historical reasons might be, and that the process of democratization would only be accelerated when the fact of a free India became a compelling force with the rulers of the States, in which circumstances the British Administration, as long as it remained

in India, would be able to exercise all the influence it had upon the States rulers in the same direction. I also pointed out that Mr. Gandhi had told me that he did not think it was possible for the States to be forced into an Indian Union, and that we took the same view, and that it must be left to the advance of democratic ideas permeating the States and their rulers from the contiguous democracies of the Indian Union. This naturally did not satisfy him as he wished some immediate steps to be taken to free the Indian States people from the autocracy of their rulers though he was prepared for the rulers to remain as constitutional monarchs.

He also raised the question of the small States which had no Treaty rights and asked what was proposed to be done as regards them. I stated that it was obvious that they would have to be grouped or federated in order to form large enough units either to come into the Indian Union or to associate themselves with other States that were outside. In this matter too he was in favour of immediate action to force the smaller States into British India as a prelude to the formation of the new constitution.

He was extremely critical of my own position in the matter, saying that he had been bitterly disappointed with my views as to put forward a document so reactionary so far as the States peoples were concerned.

91. An Open Letter by Subhash Chandra Bose to Sir Stafford Cripps, Expressing Surprise at Cripps Having Agreed to Come to India as Winston Churchill's Representative

Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 124–6.

31 March 1942

The world has been told that you have undertaken a mission on behalf of the British Prime Minister and the Cabinet to go to India and try to save India for the British Empire. It is understandable that the present Prime Minister and the Cabinet should make use of you for this purpose. But it passes one's comprehension that you, Sir Stafford, should accept such a job. You are well aware of the reactionary character of the present Cabinet. The presence of the Labourites in it does not alter its real character. Having been forced to keep company with the Labour Party some years ago, you perhaps know, more than anybody, how unprogressive that party is, particularly on questions dealing with India and other suppressed nations of the Empire.

In the days when you fought with the British Labour Party in vindication of your own principles and convictions, you commanded the admiration of many people including myself. You have been so anti-imperialist in your outlook that you even advocated the abolition of the monarchy which was served as the corner-stone of British Imperialism. That fundamental position of yours has altered so radically that you accepted a portfolio under Mr. Winston Churchill, than whom a more anti-Indian Englishman it is difficult to find in the whole of Britain. People who know you personally, or who have followed your career with interest, are consequently quite puzzled at your present political stand. One can easily understand Mr. Churchill. He is an imperialist believing in the policy of brute force, and he makes no bones about it. Even the British Labour Party's attitude we can perhaps understand. British Labour leaders are in reality as imperialistic as the Conservatives are, though they may talk in a more polite and seductive manner. We have faced the Labour Party's administration in 1924 and again from 1929 to 1931.

On both these occasions we had to spend our time in British prisons, sometimes without any trial whatsoever. India will never forget that between 1929 and 1931 a Labour Cabinet was responsible for putting about 100,000 men and women into prison, for ordering large-scale lathi charges on men and women all over the country, for the shooting down of defenceless crowds as in Peshwar, and for burning houses and dishonouring women as in the villages of Bengal. You were one of the sharpest critics of the Labour Party when, in London in January 1938, I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance. But today you appear to be quite a different man.

You may perhaps say that your task is to bring about a reconciliation between India and England. But your Cabinet has made it perfectly clear that the offer to India is not one of independence but of Dominion Status within the Empire, and further, that Dominion Status will be promulgated not immediately but at the end of the war. You have just declared in Delhi that your attitude towards India is the same as that of Mr. Churchill. We were grateful to you for such frankness but are you not aware what the Indian people think of British promises? Are you not also aware that the history of British rule in India is a history of broken pledges and unredeemed promises? And knowing as you do that the Indian National Congress stands for undiluted independence, is it not an insult to India that a man of your position and reputation should go out there with such an offer in his pocket?

Another matter which has pained all patriotic Indians is that your programme is to get in touch with leaders of all possible parties in India, no matter whether they are representatives of the masses or individuals. You at least should be aware that some of these parties have so far been used by British politicians as a counterblast to the Congress and in order to minimize its influence and importance. It is also surprising that you are reassuring the Princes that they have nothing to fear from the coming changes. Your work in respect of Princes was already taken in hand by the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, in anticipation of your arrival. To a neutral observer therefore, your role appears to be the same historic role of deceit and duplicity which British politicians have played in the past.

At the beginning of this war British politicians talked very loudly of freedom and democracy. At the same time, they have been bolstering up the claims of minorities in order to exaggerate India's differences, and thereby keep India under perpetual domination. The minorities problem is not something peculiar to India, it is to be found all the world over. If British politicians really believe in democracy why don't they apply the democratic solution to India and solve the Indian problem?

British politicians and the British propaganda machine have been continually reminding us since 1939 that the Axis Powers are a menace to India and now we are being told that India is in danger of an attack by the enemy. But is not this sheer hypocrisy? India has no enemies outside her own frontiers. Her one enemy is British imperialism and the only adversary that India has to get rid of is the perpetual aggression of British imperialism. It was the British Government that declared India to be a belligerent power, against the will of the Indian people, and has since then been forcibly exploiting the resources of India for Britain's war purposes. Further, it was the same Government that interned and imprisoned in India the nationals of Germany, Italy and Japan after the outbreak of war. The Axis Powers and the Indian people realise that they are not at war with one another, and the former have not, therefore, imprisoned Indian nationals living in their countries, and have nothing but sympathy and goodwill for them. I am convinced that if India does not participate in Britain's war there is not the least possibility of India being attacked by any of the Axis Powers.

92. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee Rejecting the Proposals

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 188–91.

2 April 1942

The Working Committee have given their full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet in regard to India and the elucidation thereof by Sir Stafford Cripps.

These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India's demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis, with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

The Congress has repeatedly stated, ever since the commencement of the war in September 1939, that the people of India would line themselves with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked for the necessary conditions to enable them to do so to be created.

An essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realisation of present freedom could light the flame which would illumine millions of hearts and move them to action.

At the last meeting of the All India Congress Committee, after the commencement of the war in the Pacific, it was stated that: 'Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war.'

The British War Cabinet's new proposals relate principally to the future upon the cessation of hostilities.

The Committee, while recognising that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is fettered and circumscribed and certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united nation and the establishment of a democratic state.

Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that the people's right to self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements.

The people of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence and the Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation.

The Committee recognises that future independence may be implicit in the proposals, but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion. The complete ignoring of the ninety millions of the people of the Indian states and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation of both democracy and self-determination.

While the representation of an Indian state in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the state have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage, while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken.

Such states may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom, enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency, and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the states as well as of the rest of India.

The acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian states merging themselves in the Indian Union.

The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate.

Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national state.

The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of a Union and thus create friction just when the utmost cooperation and goodwill are most needed. This proposal has been presumably made to meet a communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among different communities to create trouble and divert public attention from the vital issues before the country.

Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis, it is the present that counts, and even proposals for the future are important in so far as they affect the present.

The Committee have necessarily attached the greatest importance to this aspect of the question, and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance.

For this the present British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and there would appear to be no vital changes in the present structure contemplated.

It has been made clear that the defence of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defence is a vital subject; during war-time it is all important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration; to take away defence from this sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity, and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her government is not going to function as a free and independent government during the pendency of the war.

The Committee would repeat that an essential and fundamental pre-requisite for the assumption of responsibility by the Indian people in the present, is their realisation as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom. What is most wanted is the enthusiastic response of the people which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defence. It is only thus that even at this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanise the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion.

It is manifest that the present Government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence, and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defence. It is only the people of India, through their popular representatives, who may shoulder this

burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom, and full responsibility being cast upon them.

The Committee, therefore, are unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet.

93. Sir Stafford Cripps's Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad Discussing the CWC Resolution, 2 April 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 191-2.

They brought the reply of Congress with them and gave it to me to read. I asked them whether this meant that they decisively turned the draft document down, and they said it was the considered opinion of the Congress Working Committee but that if any change were made they would naturally reconsider their attitude to the new document.

We went through the three first points. Upon the first argument they stated that it was difficult for them to accept a document which did not speak clearly of independence in view of their long propaganda on this point.

As regards the Indian states, Nehru particularly stressed the fact that Congress had always insisted as a fundamental matter that regard must be had to the peoples of the states and not to the rulers, and that again it was very difficult for them to accept document which went against this principle completely.

So far as the non-accession point was concerned, they admitted as their document does, that the principle of self-determination must be allowed to the Muslims in some way, but said that the very definite statement in the draft document had prejudiced any more favourable solution of the problem and had made it difficult for any agreement between them and the Muslim League upon this matter; that they feared the partition of India and definitely thought that this encouraged it, and that the principle of a united India was one for which they were prepared to go to almost any length.

So far as the Defence question was concerned I did not discuss this further but we arranged that they would come and see the Commander-in-Chief as soon as an appointment could be made.

94. Jawaharlal Nehru's Interview to the Press Replying to Comments in the American Press
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 193.

4 April 1942

I have read with interest the comments in the American press on the proposals of the British Cabinet brought here by Sir Stafford Cripps.¹ These comments are obviously influenced by the urgency of events, and we appreciate that urgency ourselves. Indeed, for us, it is even more urgent than for the U.S.A. But behind these comments there is not enough appreciation of the situation in India or of the public reaction to events. It is difficult for me to deal with this matter fully at this stage as the Working Committee has decided not to release its resolution yet. We do not wish to take any step in this respect which might come in the way of Sir Stafford Cripps. Our decision, when released, will explain conclusively our viewpoints which, I believe, are

shared by vast numbers of our people. The time for further elucidation will come then. I trust our friends in India and abroad will wait for its publication, whenever it may come.

The future is undoubtedly important and we may accept a proposal for that future provided it is not opposed to our interests and principles. But ultimately it is the present, with all its urgency and possibility of far-reaching consequences, that counts. The feasibility of any proposal has primarily to be judged by its application to the present as to whether it can light a fire in the people's hearts to enable them to meet the heavy trials of today and tomorrow.

¹ Several important American papers, including the *Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and the *New York Post*, suggested that the United States might act as a mediator or guarantor of the British promises. The *Oregon Journal* feared that if the Cripps proposals which constituted a genuine plan for independence were rejected, it would jeopardise India's chances for independence. The *New York Herald*, in a leader entitled 'India Talks, Japan Acts', emphasized that the proposals, unlike the earlier promises, had the support of the people of Britain and India, and that while the Indian press complained that the American press had failed to understand the nuances of the problem, 'Americans understand the essentials of the problem because they know what is freedom'. There could be no freedom unless the enemies of freedom were destroyed forever. The *New York Times*, on 31 March 1942, asserted that if the proposals were refused, Indians would lose America's comradeship.

95. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to A.E. Foot, Explaining the Congress Stand on Cripps Proposals

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 195–7.

5 April 1942

My dear Foot,

Your letter of the 3rd April.¹ It is a little difficult for me to deal with this matter as we have promised not to give publicity to our resolution yet. We have tried and we are trying to explore every possible avenue of a suitable settlement.

I might mention however that the three points you have raised are based on misapprehensions.

- (i) It is obvious that the average Indian has no faith in British promises.² That is natural enough. But this does not affect in any way our consideration of the present problem. The future is so uncertain that any promises made in regard to it has no great value. For my part I have no doubt about the *bona fides* of Cripps and also that a large number of Englishmen desire Indian freedom, though rather vaguely. But this is something more than a question of individual *bona fides*. National policies are determined by various forces at play and no individual can really guarantee them in advance. I should like much to happen in India but I am totally unable to guarantee it, because I do not know how far I can have my way then. However all this is beside the point and does not affect the present situation in the least.
- (ii) It is true that the proposals encourage the spirit of disruption in India.³ As such they are harmful. In theory one cannot and one does not want to compel large groups of people to act against their will. In practice one tries to discourage such ideas and create conditions which lead to unity. For the first time official recognition is being given to the possibility of India being split up. This is bad and will lead to evil consequences, not only in the communal sphere, but also among politically reactionary groups. However, even these proposals need not be a bar to present agreement. It is the present that counts.

- (iii) What Indian big business wants⁴ is not what I or my colleagues want, and their attitude has little if any influence on our decisions. So far as we are concerned, we are completely committed, whatever the future might be, regarding a settlement with Britain, to opposition to Japanese aggression and invasion in India. We will not submit to this whatever the consequences. This is the attitude I have taken up in public wherever I have spoken, and that is the attitude that the Congress as a whole is taking up. There are no doubt individuals or groups who think otherwise. But we are going to face them and oppose them.

¹ In his letter Foot argued that if Jawaharlal was thinking of turning down the proposals because, with regard to defence, the proposals were inadequate, this was understandable, but should be specifically stated.

² Foot had stated that suspicion of Indian public opinion about British promises and imputing of motives, even to an enemy, without being certain, contravened the fundamental principles of decent human behaviour.

³ Arguing against the charge that the proposals would split India Foot said that the Congress should be prepared to put to test its belief that Pakistan was not wanted by the majority of the provinces concerned.

⁴ Foot believed that Indian big business definitely did not want to displease the Japanese, as they would like to continue in their strong position in the Japanese new order. He hoped Jawaharlal and those of his way of thinking would not wish to be identified with them.

96. Notes of Jawaharlal Nehru's Interview with Louis Arthur Johnson,
6 April 1942 (as Prepared by O.K. Caroe, Secretary, External
Department, Government of India)
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 194–5.

After explaining that Nehru had sought the interview, Colonel Johnson¹ said that he had suspected that Nehru believed that he, Colonel Johnson, had brought a letter from the President but there was no question of any such letter. Colonel Johnson asked me to pass on to His Excellency [Linlithgow] the main lines of his conversation with Nehru which were broadly as follows:

He gathered that Congress had decided not to break on the non-accession issue, partly he understood because they believed that economic factors would make non-accession impossible (Nehru may have been thinking of the 60 per cent formula which has in effect barred non-accession by the Punjab and Bengal, and of the Central subsidy to the N.W.F.P., which will of course be a strong influence against non-accession by that Province). Nehru had then gone on to speak of hitching India's wagon to America's Star and not Britain's. Colonel Johnson then told him that it was the President's determination and the determination of the American people to support Great Britain to the end of the war, to the utmost and to preserve the integrity of the British Empire and that there must be no doubt in anybody's mind in India that America would see the war through. If America was convinced that Congress was solidly supporting the war effort, the sympathy she had previously had for Congress would continue; if, on the other hand, it appeared that Congress was saving face, or hedging or taking action to slow down the conclusion the war, it was not too much to say that America would hate Congress. Colonel Johnson added, in response to an interjection of Nehru's, that America would have the leading place at the peace table, that her attitude towards India at that table would be determined by the wholeheartedness or otherwise of the Indian war effort. If he himself were associated with the Peace Conference he would do his best to see that an India which had wholeheartedly backed the war effort obtained America's fullest support in attaining her ambitions. But the

matter would be far otherwise, if at that time the American people felt that American blood had been spilt unnecessarily and the war prolonged by shilly-shallying. Nehru then spoke of his belief that India, particularly rural India, would not create a refugee problem, the villagers were rooted where they stood and would not move. He also enlarged on his belief that Indians, particularly villagers, would make fine guerillas (at this point I interjected doubts regarding the capacity of the Bengal villager for guerilla warfare and Colonel Johnson said even Nehru himself was anxious whether Bengal would stand fast against an invader).

Nehru had then gone on to speak of the issue regarding control of Defence, and he said that although Congress would not break on the non-accession issue, they must break if they were not satisfied on this. Colonel Johnson added that Nehru and other Congress leaders, he gathered, did not like the present Commander-in-Chief,² though they expressed admiration for his predecessor.³ They were determined, he thought, to get a Defence Minister, but Nehru, when asked, had said that this would in no way involve interference with control of operations or in the field. The supply issue was not touched on ...

¹ (1892–1956); Personal Representative of President Roosevelt to India from March–June 1942; became a personal friend of Jawaharlal; Secretary of Defence, 1949–50, in the Truman administration.

² Sir Archibald Percival Wavell.

³ Sir Alan Fleming Hartley.

97. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Col. Johnson Commenting on the Alternative Schemes Discussed at Their Meeting, and Adding that India's Independent Status Needs to Be Recognized by the United Nations

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 197–9.

8 April 1942

Dear Colonel Johnson,

We have given careful thought to the suggestions you have made. May I say that we appreciate greatly the friendly interest you are taking in the attempt to solve, at least for the present, the problems that face us.

As I told you yesterday, the new proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British War Cabinet, were entirely unsatisfactory.¹ Both the approach and the allocation of subjects were, in our opinion wrong, and there was no real transfer of responsibility for Defence to representative Indians in the National Government. Such transfer is essential for the successful defence of the country, for on it depends the full mobilization of the war-potential of the country.

The approach you have made in the draft you gave me this morning seems to us a more healthy one. With some alterations that we suggest, it might be made the basis of further discussions. But, it must be remembered, that a very great deal depends on the allocation of subjects between the Defence Department and the War Department, and until this is done, it is not possible to give a final opinion.

Leaving aside this subject of allocation for the present, we would suggest that the formula which is to form the basis of discussion should be as follows:

- (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, for the duration of the war, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be an extra-ordinary member of the National Cabinet for that purpose.
- (b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.
- (c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence, including those now dealt with by the Defence Coordination Department.

You will notice that this does not differ materially from your formula. The general approach is that the National Government is responsible for the entire government of the country including its defence. But, in view of the war and the obvious necessity of allowing full scope for operations to the Commander-in-Chief, functions relating to the conduct of the war are delegated to him and are to be exercised by him for the direction of the war. He will, in effect, have full control of these operations and of the war activities of the armed forces in India.

It is presumed of course that there will be full cooperation between the Defence Department and the War Department. The national Government will inevitably strain every nerve towards the successful defence of the country and will give all possible help to the Commander-in-Chief in this behalf.

Sir Stafford Cripps has already stated that a representative Indian will be a member of the War Cabinet in London, and that membership of the Pacific Council would likewise be offered to a representative Indian.

There are many other important matters which have to be considered, but I do not wish to trouble you with them at this stage. I should like to refer to them, however, in order to prevent any misapprehension later on. In the draft declaration proposed to be made by the British Government there is much with which we do not agree. The preamble commits us to Dominion Status, though there is a possibility of our voting ourselves out later on. Clauses C and D relate, *inter alia*, to the right of a province not to join the Union and to the nomination by the rulers of states' representatives to the constitution-making body. We think these provisions are bad and likely to have dangerous consequences.

We have indicated our views in regard to them in the resolution, a copy of which I have already sent you. All these provisions are for the future and they need not come in the way of a present arrangement. As controversial matter, they might be left out of any proposed declaration at this stage. It will be open to any group or party to adhere to its own opinions in regard to them and yet cooperate in a settlement for present action. We hope that it may be possible for us to arrive at a satisfactory settlement about them at a future date.

One other matter to which we attach importance might be mentioned, though it does not arise out of the present talks. We presume that the independent status of India will be recognized by the United Nations. Whenever this is done, it will greatly help our common cause and strengthen our bonds with each other.

¹ In his letter of 7 April 1942 to Azad, Cripps proposed a defence formula, after taking into account the Congress Working Committee's objections and in consultation with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Accordingly, the Commander-in-Chief was to retain his seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council as a War Member, and also retain his control and command of the army activities in India, subject only to the control of His Majesty's Government and the War

Cabinet. An Indian representative with full powers over defence would be represented on the War Cabinet and the Pacific Council, and an Indian on the Viceroy's Executive Council would take over sections of the Defence Department which organizationally could be separated from that of Commander-in-Chief. These included public relations; demobilization and post-war reconstruction; petroleum supply; representation on Eastern Group Supply Council; welfare of troops and their dependents; canteens; non-technical educational institutions; stationery and printing; and arrangements for foreign missions, representatives and offices. The Indian member would also take over the functions of the Defence Coordination Department then under the Viceroy, and other important functions related to defence. These included denial policy; evacuation from threatened areas; signals coordination; and economic warfare.

98. Statement to the Press by Jawaharlal Nehru, Replying to the Comments in the American Press

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 200–1.

9 April 1942

I have refrained from saying much about the American press comments¹ on the present Indian situation. It is always difficult to judge from selected extracts through an agency which is far from impartial what American public opinion might be thinking or saying. I have looked to America with considerable admiration and goodwill. I wish her success in her present great endeavour. Nevertheless I must say that many of the American press comments have amazed me and I can only understand them on the basis of American ignorance of conditions in India. We have had long homilies and patronizing advice as to what is good for us and what is not. There has been sometimes an element of threat in case we do not accept that advice. The advice of friends is always welcome and worthy of consideration. But we are not used to patronage from any country or people and we do not shape our policy on the basis of superior homilies or threats. In this world situation fraught with peril it is right that we should consult each other and find a way out to the common advantage of a common cause. But I want to make it clear that we have issued no appeals to anybody or asked for anyone's intervention. For my part I admire President Roosevelt and consider that he has been shouldering a very great burden worthily. I think he will inevitably play a great part in the future. But we have not asked for his intervention in our problems for we realise that the burden is ours and we must shoulder it. We have shouldered it against the might of a great Empire during the last twenty-two years and we have not bowed down to superior might in spite of pains and penalties. We propose to stand erect in future also whatever happens. We realise that the achievement of freedom for India, which we have desired so passionately and worked for during these long years, is our business. If we are strong enough to achieve it we shall do so. If not we shall fail. We rely ultimately on ourselves only and on no others, though the cooperation of others in a worthy task is always welcome.

Colonel Louis Johnson has taken a friendly interest in our problem of today and we are grateful to him for it. But it will be unfair to him and unfair to us to imagine that the burden of any decision or of intervention is cast upon him.

We have had sufficient experience of British statesmanship in India and elsewhere. Whatever the war may have done, there has been little difference in the tone or voice of the most eminent of the British leaders. Lord Halifax, whom we know well in India, still continues to sermonise us as of old and to tell us how insignificant we are in this great land of India.² Perhaps so. Then why trouble about us or come to us with proposals? Lord Halifax is pleased with what his people have done here. Let him live in his complaisant world and leave us to our resources and sorrows. But whatever happens we will not give up our objective of independence and

complete freedom for India. Our allegiance is to the Indian people and to no one else and in their service and for India's freedom we shall labour and if necessary die.

¹ Commenting on the report that Jawaharlal had appealed to Johnson for Roosevelt's aid in considering the British proposals, the *New York Herald Tribune* on 8 April 1942 observed that it was fantastic to suppose the United States forcing Britain into decisions which Britain 'believed unwise or accept the responsibility for imposing problems of India. The notion that the United States could do so tends to stultify position which Nationalist leaders themselves have claimed that India should be free to work out her own destiny without artificial hindrances or restrictions by the British. That opportunity Britain seemed categorically to promise in her latest offer, but now the objection to it is that various Indian leaders are now asking for greater freedom to meet their own problems. Instead they seem to be insisting that the problems should be foreclosed in their favour.' *The New York Times* was also sceptical of what Roosevelt could do to smooth the relations between India and Britain but added that a compromise should be reached in the interest of Indian freedom and the United Nations.

² In his speech at New York Town Hall on 7 April 1942, Halifax observed that the Indian National Congress was not cooperating with the British in the war effort despite the social, economic, and political advancement of India under British rule. He contended that the Congress did not represent the interests of the Muslims and of a section of the Hindus. Even the Princely states did not fit in the scheme of the Congress. He reiterated that in order 'to assume the rights and duties of full manhood among nations', and at a time of grave crisis, the Congress, the Muslim league, the Princes and the depressed classes should forge a unity and come to a broad agreement, keeping in view the interests of all the minorities.

99. Full Text of the Correspondence That Passed between the Congress President and Sir Stafford Cripps in Connection with the British Government's Draft Declaration, 30 March–11 April 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942 Pt-I, NMML.

Full text of the correspondence that passed between the Congress President and Sir Stafford Cripps in connection with the British Government's Draft Declaration:

30 March 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

I had the opportunity of a short talk with H.E. the Viceroy last night, during which he discussed with me his views as to the implementation of clause (e) of the draft declaration.

It must be clearly understood that the final definition of the division of responsibilities between His majesty's Government and the Government of India is as stated in paragraph (e) of the document. I propose to make the position as to this as clear as I can in my broadcast tonight.

The Viceroy would be prepared to consult with Indian leaders on this basis to see whether it were possible to designate an Indian to some office connected with the Government of India's defence responsibilities without in any way impinging upon the functions and duties of the Commander-in-Chief either in his capacity as supreme commander of the armed forces in India or as the member of the Executive Council in charge of Defence.

I give you this information as you put the question to me when last I had the pleasure of seeing you.

Yours sincerely
R. Stafford Cripps

31 March 1942

My Dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of today. The reply which I gave at my press conference, and to which Mr. Morarjee refers in the telegram you have sent me, was, I assure you, not intended to convey any lack of appreciation of the importance of Indian commercial interests. I was dealing with the position in regard to European commercial interests if the proposals which I have been discussing with you and the other leaders are given effect, and I said that I had seen representatives of the European community because the interests of that community might be affected. After all, the Europeans are a minority element in India who are entitled to be heard in such discussions as at present, not only in regard to their business interests but on other matters. Indian business interests will presumably be able to make their voice heard in the constitution-making body through those members of the Provincial legislatures who represent their interests, and then would be the time and place at which their interests would have to receive consideration. It does not seem to me that, it would really be helpful to the discussions I have come here to hold to see Mr. Morarjee although I would have been happy to do so if I had been able to stay here longer than I can on this occasion.

I am exceedingly sorry that my letter of yesterday should have been delayed in reaching you. My Secretary took it to Birla House in the belief that the Working Committee was meeting there and understood that it would be immediately communicated to you.

Yours sincerely

R. Stafford Cripps

1 April 1942

Dear Maulana Sahib

I understand from the Hindu Press that difficulties are still in the mind of Congress as to the question of the responsibility for the Defence of India.

I have done what I could to clarify this point but as I think it would be a tragedy if negotiations were to break down upon any misunderstanding of the position. I should like to suggest that I should ask the Commander-in-Chief to meet yourself and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with myself in order that he may explain fully to you the technical difficulties of the situation and in order that you may make to him any suggestions you wish as to the division of responsibilities in this sphere of government. Unfortunately he is at the moment away at Calcutta but he is expected back on Saturday next at the latest (and possibly earlier). If you consider this a helpful suggestion—as I hope you will—I will ask him the moment he returns whether he will be prepared to attend such a meeting and I do not anticipate that there will be any difficulty about it.

I am sure you will realise that I do not want to be met with an impasse if there is any reasonable way out.

Yours sincerely

R. Stafford Cripps

1 April 1942

My dear Sir Stafford

I have your letter of today's date, for which I thank you.

If you so desire it, I shall gladly meet the Commander-in-Chief and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will, I hope, be able to accompany me.

My Committee have already arrived at a decision in regard to the proposals communicated by you to us. It was my intention to send this to you this evening, or possibly to take it over in person, in case you wished to discuss any point contained in it. This decision naturally covers other points also apart from Defence. I hope to send it to you some time today. If you wish to meet me again in regard to this I shall gladly meet you.

In your letter you refer to the 'Hindu Press'. I do not know what exactly you mean by this.

Yours sincerely

Abul Kalam Azad

My dear Maulana Sahib

Thank you very much for your letter.

I will make the arrangement for the meeting with the Commander-in-Chief the moment he returns.

As to the document you are sending over, I understand this expresses the views of the Congress Working Committee upon the proposals, but that it is not intended to be a definite and final statement as to the Congress attitude, in view of our meeting again.

I should be most grateful if you could come over and see me with regard to it tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

I apologise for the reference to the 'Hindu Press.' I was referring to the 'Hindustan Times' amongst other papers.

Yours sincerely

R. Stafford Cripps

My dear Maulana Sahib

2 April 1942

Mr. Jinnah has asked me to give him a clear picture of the method by which I have proposed that a Province should decide whether it will or will not join an Indian Union set up in accordance with the procedure laid down in His Majesty's Government draft declaration. I have told him in reply that the proposition which I have put orally to him and to the other leaders is that a Province should reach its decision by a vote in the Legislative Assembly on a resolution that the Province should join the Indian Union, and that if the majority for accession is less than 60%, the minority would have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult male population.

I explained this to you at our first meeting, but as I have written to Mr. Jinnah in this sense, I thought it desirable to give you a similar letter.

Yours sincerely

R. Stafford Cripps

Dear Maulana Sahib,

3 April 1942

I have now been able to see His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and he will be very glad to meet you and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to discuss the position regarding Defence. Subject to your convenience, 6 o'clock tomorrow evening would suit General Wavell, and if you can manage this, I suggest that you should come here at 10 minutes to 6 p.m., and I will go up with you to the Commander-in-Chief's Office.

If there are any specific points of detail about organization which you wish to raise, I should be very much obliged if you could let me have a note of them tonight or first thing tomorrow morning so that the Commander-in-Chief can consider them before the meeting.

Yours sincerely

R. Stafford Cripps

7 April 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib

I have, as I promised when I last saw you, consulted His Majesty's Government as to what further step could be taken in order to meet the criticism of your Working Committee that under clause (e) of the draft declaration the defence of India would not fall to be administered by a representative Indian. Although, as the Working Committee have fully understood, it is impossible to make any change in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities, His Majesty's Government are anxious to give representative Indians the maximum possible participation in the Government during that period, in accordance with the principle laid down in clause (e) of the draft declaration.

I have explained to you the technical difficulties with regard to the position of the Commander-in-Chief and will not here reiterate them.

I have also pointed out that all those main aspects of the defence of India which at present fall under the care of other members of the Executive (e.g., Civil Defence, Supply, Home Affairs, Communications, etc., etc.) will, if the scheme is accepted, be administered by representative members in the new National Government.

His Majesty's Government are however anxious to do their utmost to meet the wishes of the Indian people, and to demonstrate their complete trust in the co-operative effort of the two peoples, British and Indian, which they hope may reinforce the Defence of India.

They also appreciate the force of the arguments that have been put forward as to the necessities of an effective appeal to the Indian peoples for their own defence.

I am therefore authorized to propose to you as a way out of the present difficulties that,

- (a) The Commander-in-Chief should retain a seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council as 'War Member' and should retain his full control over all the war activities of the armed forces in India subject to the control of His Majesty's Government and the War Cabinet upon which body a representative Indian should sit with equal powers in all matters relating to the Defence of India. Membership of the Pacific Council would likewise be offered to a representative Indian.

- (b) An Indian representative member would be added to the Viceroy's Executive, who would take over those sections of the Department of Defence which can organizationally be separated immediately from the Commander-in-Chief's War Department and which are specified under head (i) of the annexure. In addition this member would take over the Defence Co-ordination Department which is at present directly under the Viceroy, and certain other important functions for the Government of India which are directly related to Defence and which do not fall under any of the other existing departments and which are specified under head (ii) of the annexure.

His Majesty's Government very much hope, as I personally hope, that this arrangement will enable the Congress to come into the scheme so that if other important bodies of Indian opinion are also willing it will be possible for His Excellency the Viceroy to embark forthwith upon the task of forming the new National Government in consultation with the leaders of the Indian opinion.

Yours sincerely

R. Stafford Cripps

Annexure

- (i) Matters now dealt with in the Defence Department which would be transferred to a Defence Co-ordination Department.
 - (a) Public relations.
 - (b) Demobilization and post-war reconstruction.
 - (c) Petroleum Officer, whose functions are to calculate the requirements of, and make provision for, all the petroleum products required for the Army, Navy and Air Force, and for the Civil Departments including storage and distribution.
 - (d) Indian representation on the Eastern Group supply Council.
 - (e) Amenities for, and welfare of, troops and their dependants, including Indian soldiers abroad.
 - (f) All canteen organizations
 - (g) Certain non-technical educational institution, e.g. Lawrence schools, K.G.R.I.M. Schools and the Prince of Wales' Royal Indian Military College.
 - (h) Stationery, Printing and forms for the Army.
 - (i) Reception, accommodation and social arrangements for all foreign missions, representatives and officers.
- (ii) In addition the Defence Co-ordination Department would take over many major questions bearing directly on defence, but difficult to locate in any particular existing departments. Examples are:
 - 'Denial' policy;
 - Policy of evacuation from threatened areas;
 - Signals co-ordination;
 - Economic warfare.

[The formula for defence suggested in the above letter was considered by the Working Committee and rejected. After the rejection of the above formula a second formula for Defence, the Johnson Formula, was placed before the Working Committee. There was no list of subjects or functions attached to this.]

Johnson Formula for Defence

In amplification of clause (e) of the draft declaration His Majesty's Government make the following proposition upon the subject-matter of the Defence of India:

- (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in charge of a representative Indian member with the exception of functions to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as war member of the Executive Council.
- (b) A war department will be constituted which will take over such functions of the Defence Department as are not retained by the Defence Member. A list of all the retained functions has been agreed, to which will be added further important responsibilities including the matters now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department and other vital matters related to the defence of India.

[The Congress Working Committee having considered the above formula varied it as follows:]

Congress Working Committee Formula

- (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, for the duration of war, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be an extraordinary member of the National Cabinet for that purpose.
- (b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.
- (c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence, including those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department.

Sir Stafford Cripps' Formula

[Sir Stafford Cripps amended as follows the Working Committee's formula given above.]

- (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, until the new constitution comes into operation, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be a member of the Executive Council for that purpose.
- (b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.
- (c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence in the Defence Department and those now dealt with by the Defence Co-ordination Department in addition to other important matters closely related to Defence.
- (d) In the event of any new functions falling to be discharged in relation to Defence or any dispute arising as to the allocation of any old functions it shall be decided by His Majesty's Government.

The War Department, for which the Commander-in-Chief will be Member, will be responsible for the governmental relations of G.H.Q. N.H.Q. and A.H.Q., which include:

1. Examining and sanctioning all proposals emanating from G.H.Q., and A.H.Q.
2. Representing the policy of Government on all questions connected with the war which originate in or concern G.H.Q., N.H.Q., or A.H.Q.
3. Acting as the channel of communication between the Government of India and H.M.G. on all such questions.
4. Acting as liaison between these headquarters and the other Departments of Government, and Provincial Governments.

Dear Sir Stafford,

10 April 1942

On the 2nd April I sent you the resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress containing their views on the tentative proposals put forward by you on behalf of the British Government. In this resolution we expressed our dissent from several important and far-reaching proposals for the future. Further consideration of these proposals has only strengthened us in our conviction in regard to them, and we should like to repeat that we cannot accept them as suggested. The Working Committee's resolution gives expression to our conclusions relating to them which we reached after the most earnest consideration.

That resolution, however, emphasized the gravity of the present situation and stated that the ultimate decision that we might take would be governed by the changes made in the present. The over-riding problem before all of us, and more especially before all Indians, is the defence of the country from aggression and invasion. The future, important as it is, will depend on what happens in the next few months and years. We were, therefore, prepared to do without any assurances for this uncertain future, hoping that through our sacrifices in the defence of our country we would lay the solid and enduring foundations for a free and independent India. We concentrated, therefore, on the present.

Your original proposals in regard to the present, as contained in clause (e) of the proposed declaration, were vague and incomplete, except in so far as it was made clear that 'His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India.' These proposals, in effect, asked for participation in the tasks of today with a view to ensure 'the future freedom of India.' Freedom was for an uncertain future, not for the present; and no indication was given in clause (e) of what arrangement or governmental and other changes would be made in the present. When this vagueness was pointed out, you said that this was deliberate, so as to give you freedom to determine these changes in consultation with others. In our talks you gave us to understand that you envisaged a National Government which would deal with all matters except Defence.

Defence at any time, and more particularly in wartime, is of essential importance and without it a National Government functions in a very limited field. Apart from this consideration, it was obvious that the whole purpose of your proposals and our talks centred round the urgency of the problems created by the threat of the invasion of India. The chief functions of a National Government must necessarily be to organize Defence both intensely and on the widest popular basis and to create a mass psychology of resistance to an invader. Only a National Government could do that, and only a government on whom this responsibility was laid. Popular resistance must have a national background, and both the soldier and the civilian must feel that they are fighting for their country's freedom under national leadership.

We pointed this out to you. The question became one not of just satisfying our national aspirations but of effective prosecution of the war and fighting to the last any invader who set

foot on the soil of India. On general principles a National Government would control defence through a Defence Minister, and the Commander-in-Chief would control the armed forces and would have full latitude in the carrying out of operations connected with the war. An Indian National Government should have normally functioned in this way.

We made it clear that the Commander-in-Chief in India would have control of the armed forces and the conduct of operations and other matters connected therewith. With a view to arriving at a settlement, we were prepared to accept certain limitations on the normal powers of the Defence Minister. We had no desire to upset in the middle of the war the present military organization or arrangements. We accepted also that the higher strategy of the war should be controlled by the War Cabinet in London which would have an Indian member. The immediate object before us was to make the defence of India more effective, to strengthen it, to broadbase it on the popular will, and to reduce all red tape, delay and inefficiency from it. There was no question of our interfering with the technical and operational sides. One thing, of course, was of paramount importance to us: India's safety and defence. Subject to this primary consideration, there was no reason why there should be any difficulty in finding a way out of the present impasse in accordance with the unanimous desire of the Indian people, for in this matter there are no differences amongst us.

The emphasis on Defence led you to reconsider the matter and you wrote to me on the 7th April suggesting a formula for Defence.

In this letter you said: 'As the Working Committee have understood, it is impossible to make any change in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities.' The Working Committee's attitude in the matter has been completely misunderstood and I should like to clear this up, although we are not immediately concerned with it. The Committee do not think that there is any inherent difficulty in the way of constitutional changes during the war. Everything that helps in the war not only can be but must be done, and done with speed. That is the only way to carry on and win a war. No complicated enactments are necessary. A recognition of India's freedom and right to self-determinations could easily be made, if it were so wished, together with certain other consequential but important changes. The rest can be left to future arrangements and adjustments. I might remind you that the British Prime Minister actually proposed a union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France. No greater or more fundamental change could be imagined, and this was suggested at a period of grave crisis and peril. War accelerates change; it does not fit in with static conceptions.

The formula for Defence that you sent us was considered by us together with its annexure which gave a list of subjects or departments which were to be transferred to the Defence Department. This list was a revealing one as it proved that the Defence Minister would deal with relatively unimportant matters. We were unable to accept this and we informed you accordingly.

Subsequently, a new formula for Defence was suggested to us, but without any list of subjects. This formula seemed to us to be based on a more healthy approach and we suggested certain changes pointing out that our ultimate decision would necessarily depend on the allocation of subjects. A revised formula was then sent back to us together with an indication of the functions of the War Department.

This was so widely and comprehensively framed that it was difficult for us to know what the actual allocation of subjects and departments, as between the Defence Department and the War Department, would be. A request was made on our behalf that illustrative lists of these subjects might be supplied to enable us to consider the matter. No such lists were supplied to us.

In the interview we had with you yesterday we discussed the new formula and expressed our viewpoint in regard to it. I need not repeat what I said then. The wording of the formula is after all a minor matter and we would not allow that to come in our way, unless some important principle is at stake. But behind that wording lay certain ideas and we were surprised to find that during the past few days we had been proceeding on wrong assumptions.

When we asked you for illustrative lists of subjects for the two departments, you referred us to the old list for the Defence Department which you had previously sent us and which we had been unable to accept. You added that certain residuary subjects might be added to this but, in effect, there was not likely to be any such subject as the allocation was complete. Thus, you said, that substantially there was no change between the old list and any new one that might be prepared. If this was so, and we were to go back ultimately to the place we started from, then what was the purpose of our searching for new formula? A new set of words meaning the same thing made no difference. In the course of our talks many other matters were also cleared up, unfortunately to our disadvantage. You had referred both privately and in the course of public statements to a National Government and a 'Cabinet' consisting of 'ministers.' These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new Government would function with full powers as a Cabinet, with the Viceroy acting as a constitutional head. But the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. The new Government could neither be called except vaguely and inaccurately, nor could it function as a National Government. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal changes but we did ask for definite assurances and conventions which would indicate that the new Government would function as a free government the members of which act as members of a cabinet in a constitutional government. In regard to the conduct of the war and connected activities the Commander-in-Chief would have freedom, and he would act as war minister.

We were informed that nothing can be said at this stage, even vaguely and generally, about the conventions that should govern the Government and the Viceroy. Ultimately there was always the possibility of the members of the Executive Council resigning or threatening to resign if they disagreed with the Viceroy. That sanction or remedy is of course always open, but it is curious that we should base our approach to a new government on the probability of conflict and resignation at the very outset.

The picture, therefore, placed before us is not essentially different from the old one. The whole object which we, and I believe, you have in view—that is, to create a new psychological approach to the people, to make them feel that their own national government had come, that they were defending their newly won freedom—would be completely frustrated when they saw this old picture again, with even the old labels on. The continuation of the India Office, which has been a symbol of evil to us, would confirm this picture. It has almost been taken for granted for some time past that the India Office would soon disappear as it was an anachronism. But now we are told that even this undesirable relic of a past age is going to continue.

The picture of the government, which was so like the old in all essential features, is such that we cannot fit into it. Normally we would have had little difficulty in disposing of this matter, for it is so far removed from all that we have striven for, but in the circumstances of today we were prepared to give full consideration to every proposal which might lead to an effective organization of the defence of India. The peril that faces India affects us more than it can possibly affect any foreigner, and we are anxious and eager to do our utmost to face it and

overcome it. But we cannot undertake responsibilities when we are not given the freedom and power to shoulder them effectively and when an old environment continues which hampers the national effort.

While we cannot accept the proposals you have made, we want to inform you that we are yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly national government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future, though, as we have indicated, we hold definite views about it. But in the present, the National Government must be a cabinet government with full power and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In regard to defence we have already stated what, in our opinion, the position should be at present. We feel that such an arrangement is the very minimum that is essential for the functioning of a National Government and for making the popular appeal which is urgently needed.

We would point out to you that the suggestions we have put forward are not ours only but may be considered to be the unanimous demand of the Indian people. On these matters there is no difference of opinion among various groups and parties, and the difference is as between the Indian people as a whole and the British Government. Such differences as exist in India relate to constitutional changes in the future. We are agreeable to the postponement of this issue so that the largest possible measure of unity might be achieved in the present crisis for the defence of India. It would be a tragedy that even when there is this unanimity of opinion in India, the British Government should prevent a free National Government from functioning and from serving the cause of India as well as the larger causes for which millions are suffering and dying today.

Yours sincerely

Abul Kalam Azad

My dear Maulana Sahib,

11 April 1942

I was extremely sorry to receive from you your letter of April 10th expressing the rejection by the Congress Working Committee of His Majesty's Government's draft declaration.

I will not deal with those points which are covered by the original resolution of your Committee which you sent me, as they were clearly not the reason for your decision.

Nor need I go into the question of the division of duties between the Defence Minister and the Commander-in-Chief as War Member with which you deal at length. This division allotted to the Defence Minister all functions outside those actually connected with the General Headquarters, Navy Headquarters and Air Headquarters which are under the Commander-in-Chief as head of the fighting forces in India.

In addition to these functions in the narrow field of 'Defence' it was suggested that all other portfolios relating to that subject such as:

Home Department—Internal order, police, refugees, etc.

Finance Department—All war finance in India.

Communications Department—Railways, roads, transport, etc.

Supply Department—Supplies for all forces and munitions.

Information and Broadcasting Department—Propaganda, publicity, etc.

Civil Defence Department—A.R.P. and all forms of civilian defence.

Legislative Department—Regulations and orders.

Labour Department—Manpower.

Defence Department—Administration of Indian personnel, etc.

should be put in the hands of representative Indians as members of the Executive Council.

Nothing further could have been done by way of giving responsibility for Defence services to representative Indian members without jeopardizing the immediate defence of India under the Commander-in-Chief. This defence is, as you know, a paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government, while unity of Command is essential in the interests of the Allied help to India.

The real substance of your refusal to take part in a national Government is that the form of Government suggested is not such as would enable you to rally the Indian people as you desire.

You make two suggestions. First that the constitution might now be changed. In this respect I would point out that you made this suggestion for the first time last night, nearly three weeks after you had received the proposals, and I would further remark that every other representative with whom I have discussed this view has accepted the practical impossibility of any such legislative change in the middle of a war and at such a moment as the present.

Second you suggest 'a truly national Government' be formed, which must be a 'Cabinet Government with full power.'

Without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and in a very large scale this would not be possible, as you realize.

Were such a system to be introduced by convention under the existing circumstances, the nominated cabinet (nominated presumably by the major political organizations) would be responsible to no one but itself, could not be removed and would in fact constitute an absolute dictatorship of the majority.

This suggestion would be rejected by all minorities in India, since it would subject all of them to a permanent and autocratic majority in the Cabinet. Nor would it be consistent with the pledges already given by His Majesty's Government to protect the rights of those minorities.

In a country such as India where communal divisions are still so deep an irresponsible majority Government of this kind is not possible.

Apart from this, however, until such time as the Indian peoples frame their new constitution. His Majesty's Government must continue to carry out its duties to those large sections of the Indian people to whom it has given its pledges.

The proposals of His Majesty's Government went as far as possible short of a complete change in the constitution which is generally acknowledged as impracticable in the circumstances of today.

While, therefore, both I and His Majesty's Government recognize the keen desire of your Working Committee to carry on the war against the enemy by every means in their power, they regret that your Working Committee has not seen its way to join in the war effort upon the conditions sincerely offered, the only conditions which could have brought together all the different communities and sections of the Indian people.

Yours sincerely,

Stafford Cripps

I propose to publish this answer,

Dear Sir Stafford,

11 April 1942

I have just received your letter of April 10th and I must confess that my colleagues and I were considerably surprised to read it. I am sending you this reply immediately and can only deal briefly here with some of the points you have raised.

The points covered by our original resolution are important and represent my Committee's well-considered views on the British proposals as a whole. But we pointed out to you that so far as the proposals relate to the future they might be set aside, as we were anxious to assume responsibility for India's government and defence in this hour of danger. This responsibility could only be undertaken, however, if it was real responsibility and power.

As regards the division of functions between the Defence Minister and the War Minister you did not give illustrative lists, as requested by us, and referred us to the previous list of the Defence Minister's functions, which, as you know, we had been wholly unable to accept. In your letter under reply you mention certain subjects, directly or indirectly related to the war, which will be administered by other departments. So far as the Defence Minister is concerned, it is clear that his functions will be limited by the first list that you sent.

No one has suggested any restrictions on the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief. Indeed we went beyond this and were prepared to agree to further powers being given to him as War Minister. But it is clear that the British Government's conception and ours in regard to defence differ greatly. For us it means giving it a national character and calling upon every man and woman in India to participate in it. It means trusting our own people and seeking their full co-operation in this great effort. The British Government's view seems to be based on an utter lack of confidence in the Indian people and in withholding real power from them. You refer to the paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government in regard to defence. That duty and responsibility cannot be discharged effectively unless the Indian people are made to have and feel their responsibility, and the recent past stands witness to this. The Government of India do not seem to realise that the war can only be fought on a popular basis.

Your statement that we have for the first time after three weeks suggested a change in the constitution is hardly correct. In the course of our talks reference was made to it, but it is true that we did not lay stress on it as we did not want to introduce new issues. But when you stated explicitly in your letter that we had agreed that no constitutional changes could be made during the war, we had to deny this and correct your impression.

It is the last part of your letter that has especially surprised and pained us. It seems that there has been a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude as our negotiations proceeded. What we were told in our very first talk with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-à-vis* his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me, that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions' Office.

The whole of this picture which you sketched before us has now been completely shattered by what you told us during our last interview.

You have put forward an argument in your letter which at no time during our talks was mentioned by you. You refer to the 'absolute dictatorship of the majority.' It is astonishing that such a statement should be made in this connection and at this stage. This difficulty is inherent in any scheme of a mixed cabinet formed to meet an emergency, but there are many ways in which it can be provided for. Had you raised this question we should have discussed it and found a satisfactory solution. The whole approach to this question has been that a mixed cabinet should be formed and should co-operate together. We accepted this. We are not interested in the Congress as such gaining power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power. How the Cabinet should be formed and should function was a question which might have been considered after the main question was decided: that is, the extent of power which the British Government would give up to the Indian people. Because of this we never discussed it with you or even referred to it. Nevertheless you have raised this matter for the first time, in what is presumably your last letter to us, and tried most unjustifiably to sidetrack the real issue between us.

You will remember that in my very first talk with you I pointed out that the communal or like questions did not arise at this stage. As soon as the British Government made up its mind to transfer real power and responsibility, the other questions could be tackled successfully by those concerned. You gave me the impression that you agreed with this approach.

We are convinced that if the British Government did not pursue a policy of encouraging disruption, all of us, to whatever party or group we belonged, would be able to come together and find a common line of action. But, unhappily, even in this grave hour of peril, the British Government is unable to give up its wrecking policy. We are driven to the conclusion that it attaches more importance to holding on to its rule in India, as long as it can, and promoting discord and disruption here with that end in view, than to an effective defence of India against the aggression and invasion that overhang us. To us, and to all Indians, the dominant consideration is the defence and safety of India, and it is by that test that we judge.

You mention that you propose to publish your letter to me. I presume that you have no objection now to our publishing our original resolution, your letters to us, and our letters to you.

Yours sincerely,
Abul Kalam Azad

11 April 1942

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter which I have just received in reply to mine of the 10th April. I have no objection to your releasing the Congress resolution and our correspondence whenever you desire to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Stafford Cripps



100. Maulana Azad's Press Conference on His Negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps

AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942 Pt-I, NMML.

11 April 1942

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad met a large number of journalists on April 11th in Delhi and spoke to them about his talks with Sir Stafford Cripps. In particular, he referred to his first interview with Sir Stafford, and said that he had laid emphasis on three issues.

Firstly, he told Sir Stafford that the approach to the Indian problem made in the Draft Declaration was not only not correct but was likely to lead to greater complications. If the British Government desired to infuse a new spirit in India even at this eleventh hour and send out a person like Sir Stafford for the task, the simple method would have been to send out through Sir Stafford the announcement that Britain was prepared to part with power. Sir Stafford could then have asked Indians to draw up a scheme. If we failed to draw one up, the entire responsibility would have been ours.

Sir Stafford, in reply, referred to the first part of the Draft Declaration and asserted that it was a considered decision of principle. He added that provision had already been made in it for different political organisations and it was open to them to come to an agreement at any time.

'I pointed out,' said the Maulana, 'that after concrete proposals had been introduced by him, the task of independent agreement among the parties in India had been made difficult.'

'Secondly,' proceeded the Maulana, 'I told Sir Stafford that the Draft Declaration laid much greater emphasis on the future than on the immediate present, while India demanded changes in the present system. The proposals relating to the present were not positive; they were negative.'

'I said to him that as far as the Congress was concerned I do not see how it could accept the proposals. War, I said, was threatening India; but the light had gone out of the hearts of the millions, who might have sacrificed themselves for their country.'

'Our common task now demanded that we should find a psychological approach in order to re-kindle the spark of patriotic fervour in those hearts. This could not be achieved merely by holding out promises for the future, but people must be made to feel that they were free in their own country to-day and had to defend their own freedom and their own country.'

'Sir Stafford, speaking with great confidence, assured me that clause (e) of the Draft Declaration provided for complete freedom and transfer of power, with only one reservation about defence.'

'I then pointed out that defence of the country was the demand of the moment as far as the country was concerned and during the war. Civil administration had disappeared because problems of defence permeated every civil department, and if you reserved defence, you practically reserve all the powers which you say are being transferred to India.'

'Sir Stafford said by way of reassurance that the reservations related only to the functions of the Commander-in-Chief.'

'The rest of the discussion proceeded in respect of this particular question.'

'The third point emphasised by me was that in tackling the political question in India, communal questions were bound to arise at some stage or other and would have to be solved. I assured him that as soon as the main political problem was settled, the responsibility of finding a satisfactory solution of the communal and other problems would be ours, and I could confidently assert that we would find a satisfactory solution.'

‘Sir Stafford entirely agreed with me and said this was exactly what he had said before the War Cabinet before he came out to India.

‘This naturally conjured up in my mind a picture of the present not found in the cold words of the Draft Declaration, and I, therefore, naturally decided to call a meeting of the Working Committee to examine it.

‘I, however, regret to say that the first impression of the picture created as a result of my earlier interviews with Sir Stafford gradually became blurred as the discussions on material points proceeded from stage to stage. And when I last met him on the night of April 9, the whole picture had completely faded out.’

Referring to his interview with General Wavell, the Maulana said: ‘In the course of our talks, Sir Stafford Cripps had repeatedly emphasised the technical difficulties in the way of transferring defence to an Indian member. He had suggested that we should meet General Wavell, because he could explain the technical side of the question much better.

‘But curiously enough, throughout our interview with the Commander-in-Chief, at which other military officers were present, not a word was spoken about any technical difficulty; the entire discussion proceeded on political lines. It did not strike me for a moment that we were interviewing military expert but an expert politician.

‘I think’, the Maulana went on, ‘I must clarify the position created by certain speculations in a section of the press as regards Mahatma Gandhi’s part in the discussions. The Mahatma’s views as regards participation in any war are well-known and it would be entirely untrue to suggest that the Working Committee’s decisions have in any way been influenced by those views.

‘In fact, Mahatma Gandhi made it clear to the Working Committee that they were perfectly free to come to their own decisions on the merits of the proposals. He did not really want to participate even in the earlier sittings of the Working Committee but he was persuaded by me to stay on from day to day as long as he could afford to do so. Eventually, my persuasion proved powerless to make him stay longer.

‘I want to repeat what I said yesterday that the Working Committee’s decision has at every stage been unanimous’, he declared.

He concluded: ‘It is deeply to be regretted that the aim which all of us had passionately desired has not been reached but I must acknowledge that all these discussions were carried on in a friendly atmosphere and in spite of profound differences which at times led to heated controversy. We and Sir Stafford have parted as friends. The cordiality of the talks was maintained to the last.’

101. ‘Hour of Peril for India’: Jawaharlal Nehru’s Statement to Press, Making a Plea to Indians against Any Evacuation in the Face of Japanese Advances
SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 208.

10 April 1942

In this hour of peril for India, many Indians in distant and foreign countries have cabled to me expressing their earnest desire to come back to their homeland in order to share in the perils and dangers in the defence of the motherland from all aggression and invasion.¹ I entirely share these sentiments and I am convinced that it is the duty of every Indian, who can do

so, to return to India and face the dangers that threaten us. I trust that those in authority will facilitate this return.

Whatever the result of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, the duty of every Indian is to serve and defend India to the uttermost remains. We cannot run away from this and seek safety. What safety is there for us if India is in danger? Who lives if India perishes? India calls and every Indian man and woman must listen to that call. Let each one of us stick to his post of duty whatever befalls. Let the old and the infirm and weak of heart think in terms of evacuation and of running away from duty. There is going to be no evacuation for us from this dear country of ours or from one place to another. We hold to it till death severs the connection. May we prove worthy of her and of the glorious heritage she was handed down to us.

¹ During the weeks Cripps was in Delhi, the Japanese advance towards India continued. News about their occupation of the Andaman Islands was known on 25 March, and about British evacuation of Tanngu on 1 April, and of Prome on 3 April. Colombo was bombed on 5 April and Vizagapatam and Cocanada on 6 April and Trincomalee, the headquarters of the British fleet, on 9 April. Japanese warships were known to be at large in the Bay of Bengal and the Japanese command of the sea approaches to the Indian coast had not so far been disputed.

102. Letter from S. Satyamurti to M.K. Gandhi
F. 221/42, GOI Poll (I) NAI.

13–14 April 1942

Secret: Extract from a letter, dated 13/14 April 1942, from S. Satyamurti, M.L.A., New Delhi, to Mahatma Gandhi, Sevagram, Wardha.

Now that the Cripps negotiations have failed, I still feel that we, the people of India, have got to decide our future course of action, especially in the next few weeks or months, very carefully. I think the Congress was willing to pull its full weight in the war efforts but we have not succeeded in getting the minimum power necessary for doing so with any effect. I still hope that there may be a settlement, but it may prove a vain hope. If that be so, as I am afraid it may be, a lead is to be given to our own people. I have been discussing the situation with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sri Rajaji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and other friends. I have a feeling which I expressed to the persons concerned that our talking constantly and publicly of resisting Japanese aggression at any cost, inclusive implicitly of violent resistance, in spite of any settlement not going through, is being exploited by Great Britain, America and other nations. Their attitude is, if we are getting all the men and the materials we can for money, as for moral support if leaders speak of resisting Japanese aggression at any cost that is all we want. I think this kind of talk can easily be overdone. I agree that we, Indians, cannot and ought not to submit to any aggression-Japanese or any other. Our self-respect and patriotism alike demand it. But today taking all the facts as one sees them, what kind of resistance can we offer to the Japanese, if they invade India, except non-violent non-cooperation. Even that is possible only for a very few. Most of our people are yet unorganised, and I am afraid they may not rise to the occasion. But a few of us must and I hope will. In that non-violent non-cooperation your lead is essential. You alone know the technique and the science and I would beg of you most earnestly to give a lead to the nation. We have tried another method and have thus so far failed. If we succeed of course you will stand aside and let us do our best, but in the absence of success, non-violent resistance to foreign aggression must be led by you.

There is another matter which I desire to write about and on which I had talked to you when I had the privilege of meeting you here last before you left. I think a settlement of Hindu–Muslim problem, even on a temporary basis for the duration of the war, is an absolute necessity. How this is to be brought about, I am not able to advise you. You know better. But I am clear in my mind that only two persons can bring this about quickly and effectively, and that is yourself and Mr. Jinnah. I know the difficulties in your meeting. But the difficulties should be overcome. I need not write more.

103. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Tai Chi-Tao, Informing Him about the Failure of the Negotiations

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 229–30.

13 April 1942

.... You must know that our negotiations with the British Government have failed again. We tried our utmost to come to terms with them, even giving up many of our cherished objectives for the moment, for the dominating factor in the situation was the danger of invasion of India. We wanted to play a full part in meeting every aggressor and invader and we wanted to mobilise the whole nation for this purpose. But this could only be done by a free National Government. The British Government would not agree to this and wanted to continue the present structure and just give us a few high places in the Viceroy's Council. That was an impossible position for us, for we want no high jobs but the opportunity to serve and defend our country to the utmost and at the same time to play a worthy part as an ally of China and other countries. We could only have a popular mass effort if the people realised that their country was free and had a free National Government. Only a free people can fight for freedom.

I am deeply distressed at the turn events have taken and naturally there is great bitterness among our people. Nevertheless we shall endeavour to pursue the policy of resisting every invader and aggressor, though in the circumstances our hands and feet are tied by British authority.

The next few months are full of peril for India and China, yet I have faith in both these countries and in their future. In that faith I shall work and do what I can, dreaming of the future when a free China and a free India are closely tied together by bonds that cannot break, and work together for their own good and the world's good.

104. Jawaharlal Nehru's Telegram to V.K. Krishna Menon, Explaining the Entire Mission and the Reasons for Congress Not Accepting It,

13 April 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 227–9.

Congress decisions about Cripps proposals are contained in the long resolution and letters. Resolution was passed on April second expressing disagreement about future Dominion Status, claiming independence, also condemning possible division of India, though accepting principle of non-compulsion of territorial areas against their declared will, but subject to various conditions; strongly condemning rulers nominating representatives of states in constituent assembly, and thus ignoring entire population. Rulers influencing the making of constitution,

yet having an option to stay out. Whole conception leading to break-up of India, with British forces guarding states, interfering with freedom of Union, and encouraging disruptive tendencies. Proposals for present were vague, with reservation for Defence which made power illusory, prevented development of popular mass defence which is essential. Congress however emphasized in view of great crisis that it was prepared to set aside all proposals for future, provided responsible National Government with Defence was formed now, leaving control of armed forces with Commander-in-Chief. Cripps made clear at early stages that he envisaged National Cabinet with Viceroy as constitutional head like King, subject to reservation on Defence. Discussion therefore centred round Defence. Cripps suggested division between popular Defence Minister and War Minister who was to be the Commander-in-Chief. Defence Minister's proposed functions were trivial and unacceptable to Congress. Further formulas for Defence were discussed. Ultimately Cripps stated that no substantial change was possible, also stated no National Cabinet with joint responsibility was possible, nor could assurances be given about use of Viceroy's powers with regard to intervention and veto. This was entirely at Viceroy's discretion; may later be discussed with him. Viceroy also functioning as prime minister. Thus no major change, only addition of popular representatives to Executive Council; legal position unaltered and no assurance even about conventions. Practically repeating August Offer with minor variations. This [was] entirely different picture from what Cripps originally suggested; impossible to call this national Government or evoke enthusiasm in people. At no stage during talks was any communal or minority difficulty as Congress claiming power responsibility for national Government as a whole, and question about formation of government deferred. Last letter of Cripps surprisingly stated no possibility of national Cabinet with joint responsibility as this means tyrannical majority rule. This plea at last stage after the breakdown of talks [was] without previous discussion, reference was most unfair and unjustified. Objection inapplicable to cabinet and in any case did not arise then. Ever since Cripps [began] emphasising communal issue in old Amery manner and endeavouring [to] divert attention from real issues, also stressing constitutional issues which [were] not discussed. His whole approach has been wrong and vitiated by communal outlook. Congress went [to] uttermost limit giving up previous objectives in negotiation. Crux of matter was for organisation of national Defence on popular mass basis but this is only possible by free National Government. Increasing bitterness here and in future impossible to accept anything short [of] complete national freedom. United Nations should acknowledge independence of India. Meanwhile we are urging people to oppose aggressor invader, no submission on any account, but individual resistance is of little avail. All India congress Committee is meeting at Allahabad on twenty-eighth.

105. 'Where Cripps Has Succeeded': Rajendra Prasad's Speech at Patna, Emphasizing That the Mission Had Succeeded as Its Main Purpose Was to Create Divisions in Indian Politics, and That the Proposals Were Nothing More Than a 'Glorified Viceroy's Executive Council and a Polished August Offer', 13 April 1942

The National Herald, 15 April 1942.

'It is being generally observed that the Cripps mission has failed. I do not think so. If he came to transfer real power to Indians then our rejection of the draft declaration could have been taken to mean the failure of his mission. But we have reasons to suspect that in essence the

mission was to create more divisions in the body politic of this country. If it was so it has to be admitted that the Cripps mission has succeeded to that extent and Sir Stafford has won laurels for himself and his country.' Thus observed Babu Rajendra Prasad addressing a largely-attended public meeting held here this evening to celebrate the concluding day of National Week.

Babu Rajendra Prasad refuted the charge that the mission had failed because the Congress had rejected the War Cabinet's proposals and said that not a single Indian political organisation, nor even the liberals and the non-party leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. Jayakar, who were known to have been advocating co-operation with the British war efforts, could see their way to accept the proposals for one reason or the other. The reason was clear. All the main political parties felt that the draft declaration was absolutely barren and did not carry India either politically or economically a step further than where she was today.

Analysing the draft declaration, Rajen Babu said that the proposed constitution making body was to have representatives from native States, nominated by their rulers. This was a negation of elementary principles of democracy and it would be choking the voices of one fourth of the Indian population. The draft declaration even went further than this. It gave these dummy representatives a privilege to refuse to go by the majority decision of the constitution-making body, but at the same time they were in a position to play a decisive part in deciding the political fate of India. This was a position which no lover of democracy could accept.

Coming to the right of non-accession conceded to a province he said that it was one thing to have a number of self-autonomous units or provinces within a national state. It was quite another to grant these units the right to break away from the parent body. If such enormous power were conceded to a territorial units India would cease to be India strong and united; rather she would be reduced to a country of warring camps. Even the Muslim League, with all its incessant cry for Pakistan, had not conceived of such monstrous idea.

Interim Arrangements

Dwelling on that part of the draft declaration which concerned India more immediately, Rajen Babu said the declaration presented before them a glorified Viceroy's Executive Council and a polished August offer. On the face of the declaration, one would have thought that some amount of transference of real power was contemplated; but as conferences went on and talks proceeded it became clear that no such thing was really contemplated and specially in the matter of defence, which was what mattered most in the present situation, India was not taken into confidence. The Congress therefore, rejected the offer and Sir Stafford was informed of the Congress position, who, however, a few days after, put forward a revived proposal allowing room for the appointment of an Indian Defence Member. Unfortunately, the Indian Defence Member, it was stated, would have little to do with actual matters concerning defence, except that he would be asked to see that recruitment and supply went on thoroughly well according to quotes which presumably, would have been fixed by the Commander-in-Chief. The Congress was not prepared to accept such a humiliating position. At this stage, Rajen Babu referred to the part played by Col. Johnson, President Roosevelt's personal envoy, and said that even the alternative proposals put forward as the result of his efforts were nothing more than the previous proposals only worded differently and dressed up more cleverly. The Congress had to reject these alternatives consequently.

Axis Propaganda

Rajen Babu warned his audience against falling a victim to the Axis propaganda, especially of its far eastern member, that they would set India free, and said that it was a common political trick, almost customary, to promise liberation to the people of a slave country. What Japan had been doing during the past five years was enough to open the eyes of the people, he said.

Concluding, Rajen Babu advised his audience to be non-violent and implicitly follow Mahatma Gandhi because it was the result of violence that barbarities of the world had reached a climax in the present conflagration so much so that people had begun to believe in destroying their own creations. The policy of 'scorched earth', which was now being followed so frequently by different warring nations was an example, he stated. He advised the people to be calm and behave themselves in an orderly manner in any emergency that may follow as the result of threatening Japanese invasion. He assured the people that out of the ashes and ruins of this war India would emerge as a free and independent country if her people remained courageous and conscious of their role during the critical period.

106. 'This Shall Not Be the End of It': Statement to the Press by
S. Satyamurti Urging the Necessity of Indianization of Defence and
Settlement between Congress and Muslim League, 13 April 1942
The Bombay Chronicle, 14 April 1942.

Mr. S. Satyamurti in a statement on the Cripps mission says: this cannot be should not be and shall not be the end of it all. Sir Stafford Cripps came with proposals which he thought were big. He has now returned speaking in the accents of Col. Amery Number Two. His mission is a failure, not only because there has been no settlement, but also because he has got angry with the Congress. He dare not say anything against any other organisation and he has begun to think and speak in terms of India being a 'continent' and her 'people' quarrelling among themselves. The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress had no option but to pass the resolution it did.

No Harm in Withdrawal

One hopes that the practical unanimity of the demand for a National Government at the Centre with control over defence consistent with the Commander-in-Chief's position in times of war will be taken note of by America, China and Russia and by the British people. In one sense the withdrawal of the proposed declaration regarding the future of India can do no harm to India. Nobody knows what the future is likely to be and we the people of India, if we win this war, will be in a position to decide our future. But Great Britain has made a generous gesture in respect of that future. I acknowledge that; but the negotiations broke down on the interim arrangements. That is a tragedy which must be repaired, and not a day can we afford to lose on it. The legal argument of Sir Stafford Cripps that this question of a National Government as opposed to the Viceroy's Executive Council was brought in at the last moment is unworthy of him. If really Sir Stafford Cripps had brought only the 8th August 1940 offer in a rehashed form, he might have saved himself all the trouble.

Wanted True National Government

On the question of defence, if the Commander-in-Chief's functions and powers are guaranteed as all parties agreed the question of division of functions is of minor importance. I am personally of opinion that the Commander-in-Chief should not be a member of the National Government, but if he is then his powers as a member of the government should not be greater than those of any other member of the government in matters of high strategy. It may be that he has got the final voice subject to the Imperial War Cabinet.

My point is this—that on the question of the immediate formation of a truly National Government a solution was, is and must be possible. I see that the All India Radio, the B.B.C. and the American press are trying to exploit the generous sentiments of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajaji, which all of us share. We want to resist Japanese aggression, but our statements by themselves will not help the people of India to resist Japanese aggressions as it should be resisted unless the call goes forth from leaders of people sitting in the seats of Power. Even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sri Rajagopalachariar, great name as theirs are, cannot rouse the people to the pitch necessary. Therefore a settlement must come. A people's Government with full power should be established.

Congress and League Must Come Together

I am very clearly of the opinion that the Congress and the Muslim League should at once get together in this time of grave crisis and reach a settlement among themselves. I know it looks almost impossible but if that is not done however, I cannot see how India can give a worthy account of herself in the next few weeks or months. Perhaps, I am wrong; I hope I am right. In that conviction, I strongly and earnestly urge that all attempts must be made by all parties concerned to generate forces to compel a very early settlement, and I venture to hope that, if the Viceroy and the leaders of the Congress on the one hand and Mr. Jinnah on the other hand can be brought together to face the grave crisis ahead, a solution may yet be evolved. It should be. The sands are very rapidly running out. God give us the wisdom, the statesmanship and the patriotism to grasp the nettle and settle the future of our country.

107. 'Lid off Delhi Talks': Bhulabhai Desai's Speech at a Public Meeting, Emphasizing Non-accession and Defence as the Major Reasons for the Breakdown of the Talks, and Countering Sir Stafford Cripps's Version of the Failure of the Talks

The Bombay Chronicle, 14 April 1942.

While Congress was prepared to make almost any concession Britain was not prepared to part with anything, says Bhulabhai.

That the national purpose for freedom, national service and national self-respect had survived the failure of the negotiation with Sir Stafford Cripps was the view expressed by Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai addressing a public meeting at the Congress House on Monday evening....

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai in the course of his speech said:

'Even though the negotiations fell through three things will survive. They are, national purpose for freedom, national service and national self-respect. So long as these survive incidents of this kind however historical they may be, will occur and each one will have to be judged by

its merits. In so far as the future is concerned the offer brought by Sir Stafford looked glittering enough and we were not prepared to break off the negotiations even though the proposals had many assumptions which would cause difficulties for us in the future. While they were unacceptable by reason of the non-accession clause we should have founded the future on the hope that when Indian representatives met together there was every prospect of not disuniting India but standing under one flag. The non-accession clause had another vice and that was that the princes were to be represented by their nominees in the Constituent Assembly and as if that was not bad enough they too had the right to say that they were not coming in after exercising all the influence in the matter of debate and in framing the ultimate constitution.

‘When it came to the present as to which there was little or no mention in the original draft of the declaration, difficulties began to appear. When it came to be examined it contained no application of the future Dominion to the present State. The Congress declared that while we wanted the principle established for the future having regard to the history of our past relations with Britain, it should be implemented in the present circumstances as far as possible in fact and in action. The net result of the proposals was that the Secretary of State was to remain still the final arbiter in all affairs, that there was to be no joint responsibility of the councilors to be appointed and all the ordinary and extra-ordinary powers of the Viceroy were to survive. The result was that we could not find in the proposals any application in principle of responsibility of self-government.

Unfounded Accusation

‘On the issue of war we went further. In fact we almost allowed the country to be dictated unhampered but when it came to the civil Government not being genuinely transferred it was not possible for the Congress to accept the proposals. I am in a position to say that it is incorrect to say that any of the difficulties which I have stated above were brought up towards the end of the discussions at the last moment. This is unfounded because in the first press statement as well as in statements made to individuals by Sir Stafford Cripps it was mentioned that there was going to be a national Cabinet and hence we in good faith believed that it was not necessary to analyse it any further. That the new government will function as a national Government was mentioned openly in the first Press Conference held by Sir Stafford Cripps and there after mentioned it to our representative and these matters have been dealt with in our final letter to Sir Stafford. In the stress of emergency we were prepared to give almost every thing provided a National Government with even reasonable responsibility was formed. The position is quite clear that whereas Britain gave up nothing we were prepared to make all reasonable concessions demanded by the occasion and the negotiations broke down because Britain never really wanted to part with power.’

Concluding Mr Desai said:

‘The war is on India and we still have a duty to our countrymen. These duties are summed up in the Congress instruction regarding self-preservation and self-sufficiency.’



108. 'Why Cripps Failed': Bhulabhai Desai's Interview to the Press, Mentioning the Inability of Sir Stafford Cripps to Part Even with the Minimum of Power, as the Main Reason for the Failure the Talks

The Bombay Chronicle, 15 April 1942.

'The crux of the matter was that there was no transfer of power from the British Government to the Indian people', said Mr. Bhulabhai J. Desai, a member of the Congress Working Committee and the leader of the Congress party in the Central Assembly, explaining the breakdown of the Cripps' Mission, in the course of an interview, on Tuesday.

In reply to a question, he stated that the Working Committee assumed, during the earlier stages, that as far as the civil administration was concerned, it would pass on to the representatives of the people and that the difficulty was only in regard to the question of Defence.

Another Expanded Council

But subsequently, it turned out to be that the offer was only another expanded Executive Council. There was no question of give and take. Further, the transfer of power sought by the Congress did not involve constitutional changes of a far-reaching type. It was made plain that the transfer of power should be consistent with the present emergency.

He further stated: 'We could do with what was done in the Provinces that we should get an assurance from the Governor-General, similar to that given by the Governors of the Provinces to the Ministers in regard to the conduct of the day-to-day administration.' Mr. Bhulabhai said that the retention of the veto need not necessarily lead to the assumption that it was to be exercised every time. The Working Committee hoped to meet Sir Stafford Cripps on the issue of Military defence, if the British Government met them on the issue of Civil Administration.

'Considering our ideals and claims,' he said, 'our giving way was considerable. The Congress can make an honest claim that we wanted to be of use during this emergency. Our attitude is to be helpful, if we are asked to be helpful. It is not as if we wanted it for our own purpose. It is wanted for the general purpose of co-ordinating the common defence.'

Power for the People

Asked whether any attempt was made by the Congress to come to an understanding with the Muslim League and other parties, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai explained that negotiation at the first stage was between the Working Committee and Sir Stafford Cripps. If the Committee had been certain that so much real power was to be transferred to the people, then the next step for the Congress would have been as to how to form a Government. It was assumed by the Committee that there would be no difficulty in forming a Government, because it was not going to be a party government. He stated: 'We anticipated no difficulty in forming a Government. What we wanted was that power should be given to the people of this country and not to any section of the public.'

He emphatically denied the charge of Sir Stafford Cripps that the Congress wanted everything and therefore got nothing. The suggestion appeared to be that the Congress would inveigle a majority and oppress the minority. The charge was an entirely unjustified blame and a gibe.

It was never even pretended, Mr. Desai added, that the Congress would have been in a majority—Congress as such—in the proposed National Government and whatever might have

been the Congress could never have in the majority nor could it have demanded a majority. He deplored that Sir Stafford Cripps should have imputed motives to the Congress that they were seeking to get all the powers to themselves to the detriment of the minorities and said that fact of the matter was that no real joint responsibility was given.

The thing had to break down, he added, because even at the eleventh hour, Sir Stafford found that he could not part with minimum powers.

109. 'Freedom First': Jawaharlal Nehru's Statement to the Press,
Commenting on Cripps's Statements, the War, and the Duty of
Every Indian towards India, 15 April 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 233-4.

Among the many astonishing things that Sir Stafford Cripps said in the statements made by him on the eve of his departure was this: that the Congress wanted everything or nothing, and now they have nothing.¹ Only the last part of this sentence is true and it has been true all these years. But if Sir Stafford imagines that what we suggested to him was all that we have wanted or want today, he was grievously mistaken. For, we have wanted and suffered for complete independence in the present and the elimination of every foreign control in the political, economic and every other domain. We have wanted to live our lives in our own way without interference from any outsider. And, though we cannot unwrite the history of the past century and a half, the painful memory of which will persist, yet we want to remove everything, in so far as we can, that might keep the memory of our subjection fresh. We want to get rid of this world of Excellencies and Highnesses and the pomp and pageantry and wasteful extravagance and incompetence of our British rulers. We want to say to them, as I have said before, in the words of a great Englishman: 'You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go.'

We want much. Our appetite for freedom is insatiable. We are hungry for it, and our throats are parched with thirst. It was not what we wanted that we told Sir Stafford Cripps, but something that we considered essential and irreducible if we were to shoulder effectively the burden of today and defend this dear country of ours to the uttermost. Without this we would remain ineffective and be mere camp-followers of those who are in control today, and who have exhibited so often their utter incapacity for the task.

It surprises me how far we went in our desire for a settlement. Many of the colleagues and even the man-in-the-street came and told me that we went too far and gave up many a precious thing that we had so long clung to. Yet, we did so deliberately, for we almost forgot everything for the moment except the peril to India and our immediate duty to defend our motherland. But, we could only defend her shoulder to shoulder with our own people, with millions of hearts stirred to action, with millions of stout arms raised in her defence, with millions, it may be, of our dead offered at the altar of her freedom. We could not defend her from the mountaintops or from Viceregal residences.

The war is upon us. It is America's war, they say, for it is America that is pouring her vast resources and her treasure into this war and helping all her allies. Britain plays a minor part in it. But though America pours out her gold and sends her Flying Fortresses to the four corners of the world, we in India shall have to pay a far heavier price soon. And our price is going to be blood and tears, not of a few only but of vast numbers of people. Already we have had a

foretaste of it in Malaya and Burma. But our time in India itself is coming and it was because of this that we went to the uttermost limits of concession in our talks with Sir Stafford Cripps. For, we were anxious to face this peril with the organised power of the state and our masses functioning together. That is not to be now and we function separately. From our side, there are going to be no approaches to the British Government, for we know now that whoever comes from them speaks in the same accent as of old and treats us in the same way.

So blood and tears are going to be our lot whether we like them or not. Let us not be afraid, let us not lose our anchor, let us not run away from our post of duty. But rather let us accept them willingly as men and women who go out to meet their hearts' desire. The turn of fate's wheel has brought this new ordeal to us, the last ordeal that can face a nation. Whether we remain up or go down, we shall do it bravely and with dignity, thinking ever of the honour of that great and beloved land that has given us birth and sustenance. For each one of us, man or woman, old or young, is a little bit of India and something of her old time story clings about us. Each one of us has her precious honour in our keeping, each one of us may do something to add to that glorious heritage. What we have, what we are, we owe to her; can we ever repay that debt even if we give our lives for her sake? Our blood and tears will flow; it may be that the parched soil of India needs them so that the fine flower of freedom may grow again and its fragrance envelop the land. We shall pay the price and it will be well with us if we remain true to our faith and do not falter.

¹ Cripps was reported to have said this at a press conference on 12 April 1942 at Karachi. Later, at a press conference on 22 April 1942 at London, Cripps denied it and said, 'I did not say that at Karachi ... It was shorthand report of a long statement.' He elucidated: '[W]hat would be correct would be to say that they wanted complete power immediately for representative Indians and if they could not get that complete power for representative Indians then they were not prepared to participate in the Government of India at the present stage.'

110. 'Why Cripps Mission Failed': An Article by C. Rajagopalachari, Describing the Mission and Emphasizing that the British Had Lost an Opportunity of Scoring a Moral Victory over the Axis Powers
The Bombay Chronicle, 16 April 1942.

A First Class Moral Victory against Axis has been given up as less valuable than the preservation of a superfluous form of Autocracy, Says C. Rajagopalachari

The position in India is anomalous. A foreign Power is in possession already suddenly a second Power at war with Britain is invading India. The problems of the past are replaced by a new and more complicated problem of defending India, a task that cannot be efficiently performed by a Government without the backing of the people, nor by the people without the organization of the State united in purpose and plan with them.

These who are engaged in the national struggle ask themselves, are we to suspend our conflict with Britain and take her assistance to repel Japanese aggression? This may amount to assisting Britain to retain her hold over India. May we stand aside, therefore, helping neither the one nor the other? This again is impossible, for, in the conditions that will be created by an invasion, neutrality means helping the aggressor. Or shall we take the risk of an unknown quantity and help the newcomer to Britain? This is impossible for it certainly means a fresh and worse term of bondage. Did Japan come to the assistance of India any time before during our long struggle, even by way of offering moral support? She has no claim for trust on this

occasion when her action indicates that she comes with the intention of adding to her territories and resources in alliance with the forces of darkness.

Problem before India

The situation permitted a kind of national neutrality or non-belligerency so long as the Japanese menace was not an actual invasion. But this is no longer tenable. The Working Committee of the Congress came to the conclusion that in this world-conflict India's place must be with those opposed to the Axis. Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory nature of Britain's relationship with India she must gather all her power and resources and repel Japanese aggression. This view led to the corollary that the quarrel with Britain should be composed [for] the time and the people of India should be advised and led to oppose the aggressor in co-operation with Britain and her allies. The question was no longer whether we should help Britain in her war effort. It becomes now a question whether we should or should not take Britain's help in *our* war effort. And this was answered in the affirmative. Hostility must be changed into 'camaraderie'. Achievement would depend on the successful transformation of national psychology. The Congress felt—and so also informed opinion throughout the world that Britain must take steps to make India feel that she is fighting the battle of her own freedom. Public opinion in Britain also moved in this direction and it culminated in Sir Stafford Cripps' mission.

The mission was given an unprecedented welcome and expectations rose to the highest pitch. A precise and unambiguous declaration of Britain's intention to put India in the position of an independent member of the British Commonwealth and giving her people the right to frame her own constitution, including the right to sever connection with Britain, was put down in the offer which Sir Stafford Cripps brought. The Congress had no difficulty in appreciating this declaration which was tantamount to independence. There was, however, a fly in the ointment. The component parts of India were given the freedom to stay out and the axiomatic unity of India was definitely abandoned. The States had always been a source of difficulty on account of their theoretical sovereignty and treaty rights. The Rulers of the States did not feel strong enough to discard the goal of Indian unity. Their people were predominantly for a united India under constitutional government. The new principles of non-accession of provinces founded on a legal action of independent status would change the situation and the atmosphere even for the Indian States, whose Rulers while they desire to escape from the British Political Department dislike also the constitutional restrictions of popularly governed India.

No Hand in Defence

As soon as the text of the British proposals was published the appreciation of the preamble and the precise declaration of status contained therein was modified by the threat to unity. The Congress, however, after considering the situation as a whole, thought that it was wise not to launch on a controversy with those who desired to divide India or with the Rulers of Indian States. Setting aside these questions for the present and leaving the future to shape itself in a world of uncertainties, the Congress desired to tackle the present responsibility for defence against foreign aggression. It offered to undertake it, if Britain would create a favourable atmosphere for the discharge of that responsibility by practical recognition of freedom and the formation of a National Government with real powers such as constitutional Governments enjoyed elsewhere in democracies. But we were taken aback when we were told that defence was to be reserved. Sir Stafford Cripps said that there was no question of altering this fundamental

policy. What then was to be the popular appeal? We felt that the ground was entirely cut from under our feet when this was made a fundamental point.

It was however, resolved to pursue the negotiations and see whether we could yet get something with which to go to the people. There was no desire to dislocate the military organization. But on the other hand the Congress poignantly realized the impossibility of asking people to make the supreme sacrifice and undergo suffering of all kinds without any change in the picture. A solution was reached by Stafford Cripps acceding to the creation of a War Department as distinguished from the Defence Department, the former being put in charge of the Commander-in-Chief, while the latter was to go to the National Government. There was some disappointment over the distribution of subjects in this connection between these two Departments, but that was comparatively a minor point as against the revelation which came next.

Demand for National Govt.

We were proceeding all along under an impression that the National Government to be set up would be a Cabinet functioning as in a constitutional government, that is to say that the Governor-General would accept the advice of ministers and that the only reservation was the authority of the Commander-in-Chief and of the British War Cabinet, but we were aghast when we were told that all the new Members of Government would only function like the present Executive Council members and not as ministers in a constitutional government. When we protested, we were told that we could threaten to resign and otherwise use our strength against the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India, but there was to be no agreed understanding on the subject to prevent such conflicts. On this single issue the negotiations finally broke and Sir Stafford Cripps returns home.

If this issue as to the Viceroy's non-interference in matters not falling within the field of war had been decided as it should and easily could have been, the Congress would have accepted responsibility and undertaken the task of organizing an all-out defence of India. The powers of the Viceroy have been indeed saved, but at the cost of a more effective organization of the Defence of India. A first-class moral victory against the Axis has been given up as less valuable than the preservation of a superfluous form of autocracy. Anyone with imagination can see that there would probably have arisen no occasion for the exercise of the powers which have been saved at such a cost. The reason why we wanted the assurance was to enable us to tell the people that India was in fact under a free Government of her own in the defence of which they must face death.

Irrelevant Issues Raised

This has been refused, but, what is worse, refused in a manner which cannot but fall to create deep disappointment and bitterness throughout India. It is put on the ground that Britain could not agree to the installation of an irremovable dictatorship of the majority. In any scheme of national Government formed without reference to the Legislature or the electorate, for this period of emergency, the objection is inherent. At the same time, there are many ways in which if it had been raised and discussed earlier, a solution for communal distrust could have been provided. All the National Governments formed to meet the emergency of war throughout the world are functioning practically as irremovable dictatorships. Stability and continuity are required to meet the war situation and are not defects. At the worst, it was only for the period of the war. The negotiations did not reach the stage when the composition or the manner of the

formation of the National Government were to be discussed. The whole thing broke on an issue which was not understood by anyone as having anything to do with the communal problem.

England has done a great deal of good to India and a great deal of harm also. This is not the time to indict her. The relevant facts, however, should not be ignored simply because they might read like an indictment. Losing India is not the way to protect the minorities. The Congress was willing to take up responsibility but Sir Stafford Cripps claims that his concern for the rights of minorities prevents this being allowed.

Task before India

The war is not of India's choice. Britain's rivals and enemies are not necessarily India's rivals and enemies. India is attacked because we are mixed up with Britain. Defenceless India has to submit to the wars which Britain has to go through. If this were realized by Britain she should be ready to make many allowances in favour of India.

The British Government have managed our affairs for 150 years. They have drawn from the people even during the last 30 years ten thousand millions of rupees for military purposes only. This money has been used as the ignorant villagers use cowdung for fuel. It has not been used to develop strength and bravery in the land. They have reduced the 400 millions of people living in India to a state of helplessness against aggression. The people of India come from the best stocks in the world. They have counted in past history among their sons great men in all departments of human endeavour not excluding military valour, skill and power of organization. The British Government's crime is exposed in full horror in the present crisis when India has to face an invasion from abroad. The offence of Britain is clear, but we have even under all the handicaps placed upon us tried to wrest from Britain something which could enable Indian leaders to rouse the dormant spirit in the people and reshape their attitude towards life and country. But we have failed to persuade Britain.

The Cripps tragedy, however, does not end our dilemma. British non-co-operation with the Congress cannot take away *our* responsibility to the motherland. On the leaders of the nation now devolves the heavy task of finding other ways and means for saving the honour of the country.

111. 'Azad Throws More Light on Cripps Talks': Interview to the Press by Maulana Azad, Suggesting that Sir Stafford Cripps's Argument and Terms Changed as the Negotiations Went On, 15 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 17 April 1942.

'The picture that was given to me of the British War Cabinet's proposals in my first talk with Sir Stafford Cripps on March 25, deteriorated so completely and took such a shape by April 9, that it was clear to me that the proposals were no better than a rehashed and polished version of the August 8 declaration. We could not accept them', said, Maulana Azad in an interview to Pressmen here today.

'We went far in our desire for a settlement—perhaps too far but our irreducible and essential minimum was that only a Free India could defend herself and the people at large must be made to feel that they were free in their own country and had to defend their own freedom.'

The Maulana said that the use of words like 'National Government' and 'Cabinet' by Sir Stafford Cripps in his first interview had given a certain impression and but for it, he would

not have called the Working Committee. He said that the change in the attitude of Sir Stafford Cripps may have been due to an honest doubt about these terms or the influence of Whitehall.

The Maulana reiterated that when he talked of the national Government he did not for a moment speak from the point of view of party gain for the Congress or dictatorship of majority.

112. 'That Ill-fated Proposal': Article by M.K. Gandhi on Cripps Mission, Arguing That Sir Stafford Cripps Negotiated in His Capacity Not as a Friend of India but as Part of the Imperial Machinery, 19 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 82 (the CD Version), pp. 193–4.

It is a thousand pities that the British Government should have sent a proposal for dissolving the political deadlock, which, on the face of it, was too ridiculous to find acceptance anywhere. And it was a misfortune that the bearer should have been Sir Stafford Cripps, acclaimed as a radical among radicals and a friend of India. I have no doubt about his goodwill. He believed that no one could have brought anything better for India. But he should have known that at least the Congress would not look at Dominion Status even though it carried the right of secession the very moment it was taken. He knew too that the proposal contemplated the splitting up of India into three parts each having different ideas of governance. It contemplated Pakistan, and yet not the Pakistan of the Muslim League's conception. And last of all it gave no real control over defence to responsible ministers.

The fact is that Sir Stafford Cripps, having become part of the Imperial machinery, unconsciously partook of its quality. Such is its strength. It is the almost invariable experience in India that those Indians who are drawn into it lose their originality and become like their companions in the service and often outdo the latter in their loyalty to the Moloch of Imperialism. Had Sir Stafford remained detached, he would have conferred with his radical friends in India and secured their approbation before undertaking his very difficult mission. If it be said in answer that he could not very well do so, that is exactly what I mean when I say that, having become part of the machinery, he was bound to fall under its spell and could not do the obvious thing. But it is no use brooding over the past or British mistakes. It is more profitable to look within. The British will take care of themselves, if we will take care of ourselves. Our mistakes or rather defects are many. Why blame the British for our own limitations? Attainment of Independence is an impossibility till we have solved the communal tangle. We may not blind ourselves to the naked fact. How to tackle the problem is another question. We will never tackle it so long as either or both parties think that independence will or can come without any solution of the tangle.

There are two ways of solving what has almost become insoluble. The one is the royal way of non-violence, and the other of violence. In the first way the formal consent or co-operation of the other party is unnecessary. If there is a dispute between two boys over the ownership of an apple, the non-violent way is to leave the apple for the other party to take, the latter well knowing that it would mean non-co-operation on the surrendering party's part. The second way is the usual way of violence. There the parties fight with each other till one is for the time being worsted. All interested in freedom have to make the choice. I suppose the choice has already been made by the chief actors. But the rank and file do not know their own minds. It is necessary for them, if they can, to think independently and take to non-violent action in terms

of unity. It consists in Hindus and Muslims on the wayside fraternizing with one another, if they believe that joint life is a perfect possibility, nay, a necessity. Whether those who believe in the two-nation theory and communal partition of India can live as friends co-operating with one another I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see such a preparation is silently going on behalf of both the parties. That way lies suicide.

Each party will probably want British or foreign aid. In that case, good-bye to independence. The fight will then range round not independence but the imaginary apple after the manner of the imaginary boys. I dare not contemplate the actuality. I should not like to be its living witness. I would love to see a joint fight for independence. In the very process of securing independence it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels. But if we have not, it will be then only time to quarrel, if we must.

113. 'British Distrust of Indians': Jawaharlal Nehru's Interview to the Press, Emphasizing That It Was Not Future but Present That Was Central to the Talks with Sir Stafford Cripps
SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 235.

20 April 1942

Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and failure have worsened the situation and created an impression that even in the hour of imminent peril, Britain is not prepared to part with power in India and rely on her people. While the future was important, the present situation dominated the talks. Congress was unable to agree to the proposals indicated by Sir Stafford regarding the future but still was prepared to accept responsibility for Defence in cooperation with others. The essential background for this was to make it a people's defence by mobilizing millions, trusting them, making them feel that India was free and that they were fighting for freedom. The British outlook was entirely different. It was distrustful and afraid of the Indian people and opposed to the growth of a citizen army and of handing over essential power to the people's representatives. The lessons of Malaya and Burma were entirely lost and some inefficient, reactionary governmental machinery was functioning isolated from the people.

Efficient defence is only possible by the closest cooperation between the state apparatus and the masses, which can take place only if the state is under popular control. Hence our desire for a real national popular Government controlling Defence but leaving full authority to the Commander-in-Chief for all war purposes.

At present, the relations with Britain are strained to the uttermost and there is a general feeling that Congress has been repeatedly insulted by British statesmen. No further approach is going to be made by Congress to the British Government. Nevertheless, the Congress has declared its inflexible opposition to all new aggression or invasion and will oppose in its own way Japanese or other aggressors. But, it is inevitable that popular opposition divorced from the state's war effort will be ineffective. Widespread anti-British feeling hinders mass effort. Future steps are dependent on circumstances and opportunities but the Congress is trying its utmost in spite of difficulties to organize self-sufficient units in towns and rural areas for self-protection

and is creating a background for resistance and non-cooperation with the aggressor and no surrender.

114. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Horace Alexander, Making an Assessment of the Proposals: 'In Trying to Please All the Proposals Pleased None'

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 60–1.

22April 1942

My Dear Horace,

I have been wanting to write to you and Agatha all this time but my preoccupations have come in the way. But more than that, the reluctance to send you a cheerless letter has been the cause. It is still there greater than ever. Nevertheless I must write what I feel. I hope you had my wire about Olive.¹ How well I remember her radiant face in spite of her permanent disability. God gave and He has taken her away. I know it is well with her, for she walked in His light. Sir Stafford has come and gone. How nice it would have been if he had not come with that dismal mission. He of all people should never have without having at least ascertained Jawaharlal's wishes. How could the British Government, at this critical hour, have behaved as they did?

Why should they have sent proposals without discussing them with the principal parties? Not one single party was satisfied. In trying to please all the proposals pleased none. I talked to him frankly but as a friend, if for nothing else, for Andrews's sake. I told him that I was speaking to him with Andrews's spirit as my witness. I made suggestions but all to no avail. As usual they were not practical. I had not wanted to go. I had nothing to say being anti-all-wars. I went because he was anxious to see me. All this I mention in order to give you the background. I was not present throughout the negotiations with the W.C. I had come away. You know the result. It was inevitable. The whole thing has left a bad taste in the mouth.

My firm opinion is that the British should leave India now in an orderly manner and not run the risk that they did in Singapore and Malaya and Burma. That act would mean courage of a high order, confession of human limitations and right-doing by India. Britain cannot defend India, much less herself on Indian soil with any strength. The best thing she can do is to leave India to her fate. I feel somehow that India will not do badly then. I must not argue this point if it is not obvious to you.

¹ Horace Alexander's wife who had recently passed away.

115. 'The Mission and the War': Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech at a Public Meeting, Criticizing the British and Sir Stafford Cripps and Making an Appeal to People to Organize Work in the Villages and Prepare for the War, 24 April 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 237–8.

Let us be realist. Do not forget the past of India, which is helpful to us. India, like China, has an enormous capacity for survival. We must survive and be prepared to face all situations and

with brave hearts we must face whatever happens. Individual loss does not matter in a fight for a nation's freedom. I do not like to enter into any argument regarding Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and its consequences. I am fairly competent to judge the effects of his mission in India. Sir Stafford is mistaken in his impression that the negotiations have improved the situation in India. How short-sighted the British Government has been and how all prospects of friendship have been lost! I know the English people fairly well. I painfully say that it is a natural habit of the English people to feel that God has given them the right to give paternal treatment to others. Sir Stafford Cripps thought they were arbitrators in India. In fact, Sir Stafford knew nothing about India.

India is our country and we cannot run away from it. We have to face the present danger. The position of India is very critical. I am not a pessimist. I am not prepared to see India as a passive spectator. To submit to anybody is an awful act. If I would have been in charge of Defence, I would have armed the whole nation and I would not have hesitated to take up the responsibility even at this late hour. I appeal to you to consider seriously over the present situation as difficult and critical times are ahead of us all. Indians should not be afraid of bombs. Take a lesson from the continuous bombing of Chungking for the last four years and the heroic resistance put up by the Chinese. I earnestly appeal to you to organise yourselves to carry on the *sangathan* work. *Shanti sena* should be organised in every village for the preservation of internal peace and order. In this connection I specially appeal to the students to go to villages during holidays and work in accordance with the Congress scheme. There is every likelihood of shortage of food-stuffs and hence the need for extensive cultivation of food crops. The usefulness and importance of cottage industries as propagated by Mahatmaji increase in view of the fact that big industries might become extinct and no cloth might be available from mills. When the Japanese planes are hovering over our heads, we cannot sit tight or be sightseers. We cannot afford to see the tamasha. We must get prepared. When the people and the army combine in resisting the aggressor, it will be real war effort.

116. 'Defence Responsibility Is of India's Peoples': C. Rajagopalachari's Speech on the War at a Meeting in Madras, Making a Plea to Turn It into a People's War, and Asserting that Japan Would Be Defeated If It Invaded India, 23 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 24 April 1942.

If the Japanese made the mistake of invading India, they would find their entire strength swallowed up, they would meet with certain defeat and that would be their end, declared Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, ex-Premier, speaking at a meeting in Vepery, under the auspices of the local Y.M.C.A.

While he thought the danger of an invasion was neither great nor imminent. Mr. Rajagopalachari agreed with General Wavell that it was there—distant and clear. He incidentally paid a tribute to General Wavell who, he said, thoroughly and ably explained the present situation in his broadcast. The speaker had nothing to add to what the Commander-in-Chief had said, and asked the people to read and re-read the speech, which contained in excellent English what he himself had been saying in Tamil all these days from different platforms.

Be at Your Post

Mr. Rajagopalachari emphasised what General Wavell had said that everybody should be at his post, officials and non-officials, British as well as Indian. The enemy's intention was not to cause loss of life, out to lower the morale of the people. If after a raid the enemy found that the people had not panicked but were at their posts, he would be foiled and would not attempt a raid again or waste bombs. Their post was the post of courage and the post of morale. While the speaker would ask them to take cover; and not to run needlessly into danger, he would urge them not to run into panic either.

The speaker here referred to the evacuation of people and said that there was no difference of opinion on this point between him and Mahatma Gandhi. 'We need not have unnecessary and useless crowds in cities and towns. When blind death goes about in crowds, it is better not to put too many in the target. But if you are necessary in any place, remain there.'

Defence Responsibility

Adverting to the question of defence, Mr. Rajagopalachari disagreed with General Wavell and said the defence responsibility was of the peoples of India and not his. General Wavell was concerned with the defence of another people, though indirectly it might be self-defence. But for us it was wholly self-defence. One's spirit was stronger when one was defending oneself than when one was defending someone else. He wanted everyone of them to feel that the war was one in which their own kith and kin were engaged, and that they should give no quarter to the invader. While it was true that some young men, in spite of the lack of a political solution and a National Government, had shown bravery and joined the forces, Mr. Rajagopalachari felt that a National Government alone would make the war understandable to each and everyone of the people. Then alone the enemy's attempts could be effectively frustrated.

Make It a People's War

If the people did not stand up to it, the responsibility would be far too much and even the British army led by an old and skilled general like General Wavell would find it very hard to carry on if the people were not in it and quickly too. There was, therefore, no use delaying and postponing such a consummation and making the war a people's war.

Proceeding, he said if they could defend India without a political solution, he would say, 'By all means let us do it.' But it was just not possible. He would not ask for political solution now if it had not been necessary in the law of nature—not as a political bargain. A people could not be galvanised without a powerful motive force.

'We must all pray for some good sense to dawn upon our people as well as the British, and then we will have a National Government, here, there and everywhere, in every village,' he concluded.

117. 'Unity Is Vital in India': Article by M.K. Gandhi, Commenting on the Communal Divide as an Offshoot of the Cripps Proposals, and Emphasizing National Unity as the Way Out, 25 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 82 (the CD Version), pp. 188–90.

The proposals that Sir Stafford Cripps advanced for settling the Political deadlock in India contemplated splitting the country into three parts, each part to have a different system of

government. These proposals, it would seem, would be to the liking of many of India's Muslim leaders, since they have for long advocated dividing the country between Hindus and Muslims. Yet Sir Stafford's plan differed in many respects from the Muslim League's plan, and so it received no more enthusiastic a reception from them than it received from the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League represents Muslims; the Indian National Congress purports to represent Hindus and Muslims alike. Can the Congress claim be supported? It can. From its beginning it has been national, representing all beliefs, not one alone.

Its originator was an Englishman, strange though that may seem to some. It has always had one or two Muslim secretaries. It has had Muslim, English, Christian and Parsi Presidents. Through its whole history, now running into the second half of a century, the Congress has even striven to represent the whole of India, in a manner no other organization has done. Every victory scored by the Congress has benefited all communities, Muslims and Hindus alike.

I believe that the Congress embodies the hopes and aspirations of all India. Its traditions unfit it to represent Hindus as against Muslims or *vice versa*. It is fit only to represent the common interest of all sons of Hindustan. Yet, differences between Hindus and Muslims remain, and it is said that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines that cannot live peacefully together, and that therefore they must be separated into two different nations.

I myself could never subscribe to the partitioning of the country. I would fight it with every means at my disposal and yet I must declare that national independence is an impossibility until Indians have solved this communal problem. There are two ways of solving it. One is the way of non-violence, the other the way of violence. Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the use of violence, of deadly weapons, would fain learn the trick, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence.

If peace is ever to come in that manner, through both parties being equally matched in violent weapons, I know that it will not come in my lifetime, and if it came, I should not care to be a witness of it.

For it will be an armed peace, to be broken at any moment.

Whether those who believe in the two-nation theory can live as friends with those who believe in one nation, I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with the Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. If they want partition of India on that basis, they must have partition, unless the Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see, preparation for such a fight is going on now on behalf of both parties.

I dread to see it. That way lies national suicide. One party or the other will call in outside help. In that case, good-bye to independence.

The only true and just way is the way of unity and non-violence of regarding one another not as members of hostile cultures but as sons of the same great motherland. Hindus and Muslims have worked and do work together in peace; they lived together in peace in the past; they can live together in peace in the future. Our task is to assure each son of the motherland that whatever his beliefs, his rights and religious and cultural interests will be protected by the laws of the land, formulated by a national assembly democratically elected.

Now, with the aggressor at the gates, more than ever unity is vital in India. I desire above all things to see a joint struggle against him and to achieve independence. In the very process of doing this, it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels in the same common goal. But if we find that we have not forgotten them, then will be the time to quarrel among ourselves, if quarrel we must. Not now. Now India herself stands in the balance.

118. Speech by Maulana Azad at the Meeting of the AICC at Allahabad, Asserting That the Communal Question Could Have Been Easily Solved If There Had Been a Political Solution during the Cripps Mission; Also That in the Proposals Indians Had Been Denied Power over Their Own Defence; and That the Congress Decisions Had Been Taken Unanimously In Spite Of Differences, 29 April 1942

The Times of India, 30 April 1942.

The statement that if a political settlement was arrived at they would have produced a successful solution of the communal and other questions within 20 hours of the settlement was made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, addressing the AICC today.

The AICC began its meeting in an open amphitheatre at Tagore town. About 100 members and over 1,000 visitors were present. Maulana Azad, accompanied by members of the Working Committee, came in a procession. The Secretary's report of the proceedings of the last meeting was adopted.

Addressing the session, Maulana Azad said: 'Last time we met at Wardha on January 15. Three months have passed. The war is now drawing closer to India and both the fronts of India, the land and sea fronts are now threatened. Singapore which was supposed to be an impregnable base has fallen. Then came Rangoon's turn. War is now touching our shores. Where do we find ourselves in this changing shape of things?

'We were told that the British Government was making a new approach to the Indian situation. It was announced that Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the War Cabinet, was being sent to India. Sir Stafford was not new to us. His arrival raised hopes throughout the world and in India too. The Working Committee was called and decided that I should meet him and should call the Working Committee to consider the proposals only if I thought it necessary.'

After recapitulating his interviews with Sir Stafford Cripps. Maulana Azad said that the draft declaration contained extensive paragraphs about the future. The future was so uncertain that in weighing the proposals the Congress had to see what was the decision about the present. But one thing had been made clear and it was that the country had been denied power over its own defence.

Form of Government

Maulana Azad said that Sir Stafford Cripps had in his talks told him definitely that the form of the present Government would be that of a national Government and the position of the Viceroy *vis-à-vis* the national Government would be the same as that of the King in relation to the Cabinet. He had pointed out to Sir Stafford at the very outset that the main purpose of his mission should be the settlement of the political issue only, and that other issues like the communal question and the question of the States would not be relevant at that stage and they were to be settled by Indians themselves. Sir Stafford, said Maulana Azad, had agreed, and in fact pointed out that he (Sir Stafford) himself had taken this line before the War Cabinet.

'This picture' continued Maulana Azad, 'gradually disappeared from our sight, and Sir Stafford finally gave such a different shape to the picture that we could by no stretch of imagination even care to look at it. We went far in our efforts—in fact too far to secure a settlement; but it is clear that the British Government have no trust in us. They are not prepared

to leave our defence in our own hands. This is a question of national self respect. 'A necessary concomitant of the position taken up by us in relation to the Cripps proposals was that we would be prepared to participate actively in war. It is also known that some members of the Working Committee are with Mr. Gandhi in their support of out-and-out non-violence. But, I am proud to say that throughout the two weeks of our negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, they took up a wonderfully conciliatory attitude and they made it clear that they would, consistently with their position of non-violence, do their best to assist us. I have nothing but praise for them and I want to make it clear that our decisions were unanimous' (Cheers).

Maulana Azad said that Sir Stafford had made it plain that the India Office as such would not continue but later on this point also disappeared.

'It would be wrong to say,' he continued, 'that we considered the Cripps proposals without having formed in our minds a picture of the solution of the communal and other questions. Our stand was clear. As far as the Cripps mission was concerned we were considering the political issues only. I emphasise here that we would have produced a successful solution of the communal and other questions within 20 hours of a settlement.'

'It would be entirely untrue to say that the Cripps mission had succeeded in making the Indian leaders change their hearts as far as the country's attitude towards the war was concerned.

'Sir Stafford Cripps emphasised at Karachi and on his return to London that the initiative in dealing with the Indian situation would not now come from the British Government, but I want to make it plain that no further initiative step will be taken from the Congress side either.'

Referring to the Japanese threat Maulana Azad said that only a slavish mind could imagine, that Japan would give India freedom. 'If any Indian says that we should welcome the Japanese, then all that I can say is that his mentality is a slave's mentality which can think only in terms of change of masters and never in terms of his own freedom' he added.

'Our differences with Britain should not drive us to welcome the Japanese or any other aggressor. It does not matter if it is an "active welcome" or a "silent welcome". I warn you especially against what I have termed "silent welcome" to aggressors. We will stand on our own legs. We can rely only on that freedom which we win with our own efforts. We will not tolerate any aggressor though he says that he is coming to give us freedom.'

Non-violence Weapon

'The weapon of non-violences is with us and we will use it if faced with any aggressor. We would have taken up armed defence, but that has been deemed dangerous. The weapon of non-violence has been with us for the last 22 years and no one can take it away from us.'

119. M.K. Gandhi's Interview with Louis Fischer on Sir Stafford Cripps, Stating Emphatically That He Found Nothing Good in the Proposals, 4 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, Appendix V, pp. 427-30.

GANDHIJI (hereafter G): Now I am fully at your disposal.

LOUIS FISCHER (hereafter L.F): I feel that the Cripps mission was a turning point in Indian history. The country is probably now beginning to grasp the significance of Cripps's failure, and from that understanding big things might flow.

G: When Cripps arrived, he sent me a telegram asking me to come and see him in New Delhi. I did not wish to go, but I went because I thought it would do some good. I had heard rumours about the contents of the British Government's offer he brought to India, but I had not seen the offer. He gave it to me, and after a brief study, I said to him, 'Why did you come if this is what you have to offer? If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home.' Cripps replied, 'I will consider that.'

L.F: What is your criticism of the Cripps offer? Didn't it promise you dominion status with the right to secede from the British Commonwealth?

G: C. F. Andrews always used to assert that dominion status is not for India. We have not the same relation to Britain as the dominions which are white and settled, for the most part, by emigrants from Britain or their descendants. We do not wish any status conferred on us. If a status is conferred on us, it means we are not free. As to secession, there are big flaws. One of the chief flaws is the provision in the Cripps proposal regarding the Princes. The British maintain that they must protect the Princes under treaties which they forced on the Princes for Britain's advantage. The Maharaja of Bikaner, and I take him as any X,Y,Z, reigned before the British came and had more power then than now. The second flaw is the recognition of Pakistan. The differences between Hindus and Muslims have been accentuated by British rule. Now they have been given their maximum scope by the Cripps offer. Lord Minto started this when he was Viceroy [1909]² by establishing separate electorates for the two religious communities, and since then the British have sought to divide us still further. Lord Curzon was a great administrator. I never met him as I have met Chelmsford, Irwin [Halifax], and Linlithgow. But he said one thing to one man, another to a second man, and still a third thing to a third man. With Sir Samuel Hoare, I know whom I am talking to. I know where he stands. But not with Curzon. The division of Bengal, as carried out by Curzon, was a necessary reform. It was a good measure. But it had the effect of dividing the province according to religion. Cripps introduced this same principle in his offer; that is the second big flaw. There can be no unity in India, therefore, as long as the British are here.

L.F: Well, you did not like the outlines of the post-war settlement proposed by Cripps. But was there nothing desirable in the interim or immediate provisions? Did you not think that, irrespective of the plan for the future, there might be some value in the immediate arrangements which would give your people experience in government and earn you the right to demand freedom after the war?

G: Roughly, this was the spirit in which I approached it. But when I saw the text of the Cripps offer, I was certain that there was no room for co-operation. The main issue was defence. In war time, defence is the chief task of government. I have no desire to interfere with the actual conduct of the war. I am incompetent to do so. But Roosevelt has no special training in strategy or, if he has it is partial. Or, let me take Churchill.

L.F: No, you needn't hesitate to take Roosevelt as an example. I understand the point.

G: The point is that in war time there must be civilian control of the military, even though the civilians are not as well trained in strategy as the military. If the British in Burma wish to destroy the golden pagoda because it is a beacon to Japanese airplanes, then I say you cannot destroy it, because when you destroy it, you destroy something in the Burmese soul. When the British come and say, we must remove these peasants to build an aerodrome here, and

the peasants must go today, I say, 'Why did you not think of that yesterday and give the poor people time to go, and why don't you find places for them to go to?'

L.F: If these are the matters which you wish Indians to control, I am sure General Wavell would have regarded them as interference in the prosecution of the war.

G: The British offered us war-time tasks like the running of canteens and the printing of stationery, which are of minor significance. Though I am no strategist, there are things we could have done which would have been more conducive to success in the war. The British have fared so badly in the Far East that they could do with help from us.

L.F: Apparently, then, you placed chief stress on defence. He agreed. Did Nehru and other Congress leaders take the same view?

G: I hope so, I hope Nehru takes the same view, and that the Maulana Sahib takes the same view.

L.F: In other words, you found nothing good in the Cripps proposals?

G: I am glad you put this direct and definite question to me. No I found nothing good at all in them.

L.F: Did you tell that to Cripps?

G: Yes, I said to Cripps, 'You performed a miracle in Russia.'

L.F: Why did you say that? It wasn't Sir Stafford Cripps who brought Russia into the war, but a gentleman named Adolf Hitler.

G: But I and thousands of Indians, believed that it was Cripps who performed the miracle.

L.F: Didn't Cripps protest when you said that?

G: No, he took the compliment. We thought Stalin had asked for British aid before the invasion of Russia.

L.F: No, that is not correct. After the invasion, Russia got help and is now obtaining increasing help from America and Britain. But before the attack, Stalin, fearing Hitler, could show no friendship for Britain or for Cripps.

G: In any case, I asked Cripps to perform a miracle here too, but it was not in his power.

L.F: I think there is a vast popular ferment going on in England. I flew to England last summer and stayed nine weeks. The mass of the people are resolved not to be ruled after the war by the sort of people who ruled them before the war and brought on this war. Cripps could become the expression and embodiment of this popular protest. His rise to office is therefore an encouraging phenomenon.

G: Yes, and a discouraging one too, for I wonder whether Cripps has the qualities of a great statesman. It is very discouraging to us that the man who was a friend of Jawaharlal's and had been interested in India should have made himself the bearer of this mission. Lord Sankey once told me to take care of myself, and I said [to] him, 'Do you think I would have reached this green old age if I hadn't taken care of myself?' This is one of my faults.

L.F: I thought you were perfect.

Gandhi: No, I am very imperfect. Before you are gone you will have discovered a hundred of my faults, and if you don't I will help you to see them. Now I have given you an hour.

L.F: You helped recruit soldiers for the British Army in the first World War. When this war started, you said you wished to do nothing to embarrass the British Government. Now, obviously, your attitude has changed. What has happened?

G: In the First World War I had just returned from South Africa. I hadn't yet found my feet. I wasn't sure of my ground. This did not imply any lack of faith in non-violence. But it had to develop according to circumstances, and I was not sufficiently sure of my ground. There were many experiences between the two wars. Nevertheless, I announced after some talks with the Viceroy in September 1939, that the Congress movement would not obstruct this war. I am not the Congress. In fact, I am not in the Congress. I am neither a member nor an officer of the Party. Congress is more anti-British and anti-war than I am, and I have had to curb its desires to interfere with the war effort. Now I have reached certain conclusions. I do not wish to humiliate the British. But the British must go. I do not say that the British are worse than the Japanese.

L.F: Quite the contrary.

G: I would not say quite the contrary. But I do not wish to exchange one master for another. England will benefit morally if she withdraws voluntarily and in good order....

D. CRIPPS PROPOSALS AND OTHER POLITICAL FORCES

120. Letter from T.B. Saprú to Sir Stafford Cripps, 23 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. C-46, Roll. No. S1/1, NMML.

Dear Sir Stafford Cripps,

First, let me offer to you a very warm welcome to this country. You have come on a very high mission, on the success of which depends the future of the four hundred millions of the people of this country, the future relations of England and India, and lastly the success of democratic institutions in the world as against Fascism and Nazism. From the bottom of my heart I wish you every success in your noble mission. The fact that you have undertaken such a delicate mission at this juncture, coupled with the belief among us that you are a man of strong convictions and a true democrat, inspires many of us with the hope that you will succeed where others have failed.

I have received a message from the Viceroy that you would like me to meet you in Delhi after March 26th. I have wired back to him that I shall arrive in Delhi after the 28th instant, on having from him a message specifying the date when it would be convenient for you to meet me. You may depend on my co-operation in the fullest measure. I fully realise the delicacy of the task, and if there is anything I can do to help you in the mission, I shall only be too glad to do it. I can only hope and trust that our own men will rise equal to the occasion, and in view of the common peril and the needs of the situation, sink their differences, so as to meet the immediate danger and lay the foundation for a permanent constitution under which every community may get its due.

I am taking the liberty of sending you a bound volume of the proceedings of the Non-Party Conference, held in Bombay (March 1941), Poona (July 1941) and Delhi as recently as February 1942. You will, I hope, kindly accept it.



121. M.A. Jinnah's Speech at a Public Meeting in Delhi, Commenting on Cripps Mission and Asking His Followers to Wait and Reserve Their Judgment Till the Proposals Were Fully Known, 23 March 1942

Khurshid Ahmad Khan Yusufi (ed.), *Speeches, Statement and Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam*, Vol. III, Lahore, 1996, pp. 1541-3.

Addressing the meeting Mr. Jinnah said, 'I can say without fear of contradiction that the Muslim League stands more firmly for the freedom and independence of this country than any other party. We are asking for justice and fairplay. We have no designs upon our sister communities. We want to live in this land as a free and independent nation. We are not a minority but a nation.'

Referring to the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps in India, he advised the Mussalmans to keep patience till the proposal of His Majesty's Government was put forward before them. He assured his audience that if the proposal or scheme was detrimental to Muslim interests, we shall not only not accept it but resist it to the utmost of our capacity; if we have to die in the attempt we shall die fighting. He warned the Government against any attempt to suppress the Muslim League or create disruption among their ranks.

Continuing, Mr. Jinnah said: 'It is a libel and calumny to say that we want to support British imperialism. Those who say so, know it that it is untrue. I have never accepted the idea in the whole of my life that we should be under any foreign domination in this country....'

Referring to the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Jinnah said: 'There is the fear that he is a friend of the Congress. He has enjoyed the hospitality of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at Anand Bhawan. That is all true but we should not be afraid on that score. Don't get cold feet.' He made it clear that Sir Stafford Cripps had come to India not in his personal capacity but as representative of the British Government. He, therefore, advised the Mussalmans to keep patience till the proposal, the offer or the scheme of His Majesty's Government which Sir Stafford had brought with him, was put forward before them. He assured his audience that if this scheme or proposal was detrimental to Muslim interests they would never accept it. He warned the Government against an attempt to suppress the Muslim League or create disruption among their ranks.

Righteous Cause

Continuing, Mr. Jinnah quoted from Sir Stafford Cripps' statement before the press conference wherein he had emphasised the necessity of meeting the deep anxieties which exist among the Muslims and other communities and remarked: 'I want to make it clear that we have nothing to fear. We know that our cause is a righteous one. We are asking for justice and fairplay. We have no designs upon our sister communities. We want to live in this land as a free and independent nation. We are not a minority, but a nation. We do not want to embarrass the British Government because we know the real situation. But we are not going to give help as camp-followers to the Government. We do not want that after they have won the war, they should sit on our chest. We have not accepted that position and we will not accept that.'

Mr. Jinnah said: 'I can say without fear of contradiction that the Muslim League stands more firmly for the freedom and independence of this country than any other community.' Reverting to Sir Stafford Cripps' mission, he said: 'We must wait and reserve our judgment until we know what conclusion Sir Stafford Cripps reaches, and what constitutes the just and final proposals of the British Government.'

'We are prepared to face all consequences if any scheme or solution which is detrimental to the interest of Muslims is forced upon us. We shall not only not accept it but resist it to the utmost of our capacity. If we have to die in the attempt we shall die fighting. If any other machinations and intrigues are resorted to, whether by the Hindu leadership or by the British leadership, singly or in combination, we shall resist it till we are all dead.

'There is an attempt made to disrupt the Muslim League by Muslim agents of the Congress and Muslim agents of the British. There are the creatures who are in the Congress and supporting British imperialism. Somehow or other they get publicity in the Hindu press. I cannot accept a Muslim who is in the camp of the enemy and who is stabbing us from there.

'It is a futile attempt, even farcial, to create differences and disruption among the Muslims and the Muslim League. You have shown to the world that the Muslim League is the only authoritative organisation of the Muslims.'

122. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with M.A. Jinnah, Mentioning How Jinnah Was Surprised by the First Part of the Draft by the Distance It Went to Meet the Pakistan Issue
TOP, Vol. 1, pp. 480-61.

25 March 1942

Directly Mr. Jinnah arrived I broached the question of my past attitude towards the Muslim League and told him that the views I took two and a half years ago were sincerely taken and represented my judgement of the situation as it then was and that I had regarded the Pakistan propaganda as pure political pressure. He responded very amiably to this, recognising the sincerity of my views, which I told him the last two years had changed in view of the change in the communal feeling in India and the growth of the Pakistan movement, and explained to me the speech he made the other day with reference to my visit, and this explanation started us off on a friendly basis.

I then gave him the document to read and, as I expected, he was substantially only concerned with the first part of the document, which I think rather surprised him in the distance it went to meet the Pakistan case. He stated of course that he was not prepared to give any views on it but we had a long discussion as to its effect, especially upon Bengal and the Punjab, and the main thing with which he was concerned was whether they would have the effective right to opt out of the constitution in the event of their so desiring. I told him that I had discovered a difficulty as regards these two Provinces and explained the position which would arise if it were left to the Legislative Assembly whether to accede or not, and suggested as an alternative method that all Provinces should formally accede to the New Constitution by vote of their Legislative Assemblies but that in cases where there was less than a three-fifths majority in favour of accession the two-fifths minority should have the right to demand a plebiscite of the total adult male population of the Province and that the plebiscite taken should then determine the question of accession or non-accession. He stated that he thought that the plebiscite was the only absolutely fair idea and he told me the only question was as to whether 40 % was the right figure to apply to the minority.

I asked his opinion as to the operation of paragraph (e) and he did not seem to think that there would be any insuperable difficulty, provided the Viceroy would consult the Congress

and himself on the composition of the Executive and would treat the Executives as a Cabinet rather than as the Executive according to the constitution.

He promised to lay the matter before his Working Committee in Delhi and to come back and see me immediately afterwards with his observations.

He was extremely cordial and when we parted expressed the view to me that the one thing that mattered was to be able to mobilise the whole of India behind her own defence and that he was personally most anxious to achieve this. On the whole I was hopefully impressed by his general attitude and his lack of pernicky criticism of phrases and words which I had rather expected. The only substantial suggestion he made as regards any alteration in the document before publication was that the phraseology of the second part of paragraph (c) (i) should be made clearer as regards the possibility of a second Dominion being set up. I promised to consider this before the document was actually published.

123. Letter from T.B. Saprú to Shiva Rao, Making Speculations about the Likely Responses to the Proposals, 25 March 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, R-206, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

My dear Siva Rao,

... I think Sir Stafford Cripps made a very good statement to the press and the forecasts of the *Statesman* and the *Hindustan Times* are very encouraging. On the other hand Raja has just sent me a telegram saying that friends there think my presence essential and the position is hopeless. I do not know what he means by saying that the position is hopeless. Does he mean that the chances of a settlement with Jinnah are hopeless? If so, I am not surprised. Does he mean that the scheme of Sir Stafford is hopeless? I can not believe it ...

As regards troubles inside the League I do not think that the Muslims are going to disown or to desert Jinnah. As regards Sikandar, he is a very uncertain quantity. Meanwhile I believe there are thoughtless men both among the Congress and among the Muslims, who are hoping and praying that Sir Stafford's Mission may fail.

124. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Representative Leaders of Sikhs, Baldev Singh, Ujjal Singh, Master Tara Singh, and Jogender Singh, with All of Them Raising the Possibility of a Division of East and West Punjab So as to Provide Protection to Sikh Minority in Punjab, 27 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 496–8.

After reading through the document with some explanation, they naturally raised immediately the question of protection of the Sikh minority and the possibility of having some redistribution of provincial power between the eastern and west Punjab in order to carve out a province in which the Sikhs would have the decisive voice as a large balancing party between Hindu and Moslem. We then went again very carefully through the document and I pointed out to them the successive stages at which they might hope to be able to exert pressure which would enable them either to remain part of the single Indian Union or to get some provincial autonomy within the second Union if such was formed. These stages were as follows. First

of all in the constituent assembly Congress would not have a clear majority or at least a very small one and would desire to get the smaller minorities such as the Sikhs on their side by making the most ample provision for their protection in the New Constitution. This would set a standard of minority protection which might well be satisfactory to the Sikh community and might even entail the subdivision of the Punjab into two provinces or the setting up within the Province of the Punjab of a semi-autonomous district for the Sikhs on the Soviet model. If this failed and the Constitution did not contain sufficient clauses to satisfy the Sikhs, then in the Treaty which would be negotiated contemporaneously with the framing of the Constitution we should be able to insist on the insertion of minority protection clauses in accordance with the definition set out in the document. The form of these would be a matter for negotiation. If, when the constitution was finally settled, the Moslems decided that they had not got sufficient concessions to enable them to remain within the Indian Union, then it would be necessary for them to obtain a vote of non-accession by plebiscite in the Punjab. Although they would have a narrow majority for this purpose they would no doubt be anxious to increase that majority as far as possible, both in order to make certain of a majority and also to have as favourable an atmosphere for setting up the new second Dominion as possible. The probability would be that they would try to get the Sikh vote to support their action and in order to do so would offer minority protection clauses going further than those already offered by the Indian Union and possibly going as far as agreeing to a division of the Province or the setting up of a semi-autonomous district. There would be the meeting of the second constitution-making body in which the Sikh minority would be able to exert its pressure for minority protection if it had not previously succeeded in getting what it wanted. If at all these points they had still failed to get protection, then in the negotiation of the Treaty with the second Dominion the British Government would, in carrying out the words of the document, insist upon adequate protection for the Sikh minority, and that protection would be guaranteed to the extent that if it were not given there would be a breach of the Treaty between the Dominion and the British Government and whatever action was appropriate could follow. I pointed out to them that once granted our decision to allow the Indian peoples complete freedom in determining their own constitution, there was nothing further that we could do to provide protection for the minorities as we could not intervene in the making of the constitution or in its carrying out after the Dominion had been set up beyond insisting upon the observation by the Dominion of its Treaty obligations as regards minorities.

Although they were obviously anxious, first of all to avoid the setting up of a second Dominion, and secondly, if it were set up, to cut themselves out an autonomous district, I think they appreciated that we had done our utmost in the circumstances to provide protection and they were very pleased when I emphasized to them that this matter of protection to the Sikhs had been particularly discussed in the War Cabinet because of our very great appreciation of the contribution that the Sikhs had made in the past and were making now to the defence of India.

The only other point which they raised was as regards the intervening period. I explained to them, on the lines which I had explained to the others, that the forming of the Government was a matter for the Governor-General, subject to the general consideration laid down in para (e), and that I was sure that the Indians who would be asked to participate would be chosen in consultation with the various principal sections of Indian opinion, a point upon which they laid stress.

They raised the question also of Defence and pointed out that from the point of view of Indian public opinion it was very essential that in some way or another an Indian Minister should be

associated with Defence, though they fully appreciated that all major questions of strategy, etc. must remain within the province and control of the Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy.

They were extremely friendly, and, I think, were fully convinced that we were doing our utmost for them, and they promised to take away the document and consult their Committee and come back in a day or two with their final observations.

125. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with M.A. Jinnah, with Cripps Forming the Impression That the Muslim League Was Likely to Accept the Scheme in Principle, 28 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 512.

Mr. Jinnah who was most urbane and pleasant came professedly to ask a few further questions and elucidation. The questions did not amount to anything more than he had asked before. He asked me to specify what I regarded as essentials of the scheme which must be accepted and I specified all these other than the detailed arrangements and the form of the constituent assembly provided a form could be agreed by the Indian leaders. It was quite clear from his whole attitude that his Committee had already accepted the scheme in principle, and were prepared to proceed to settle the details especially those under clause (e). We talked in a rather vague and general way about this and I told him that if Congress and the League accepted the scheme I should ask the Viceroy to get into touch with them as regards the questions of formation of a Government under clause (e).

126. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Leaders of Hindu Mahasabha, with the Latter Wanting to Know if the Proposals Were to be Accepted or Rejected as a Whole, or in Parts, 28 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 513–14.

This delegation was led by Savarkar, who spent most of his time lecturing me upon the principles of majority determination and of the fallacies within the document which I had submitted to him. On the few occasions when I was able to get a word in I tried to point out that the principle of the document was a single unitary India for which purpose a constituent assembly voted by majority would be set up and that it was only in the case of the failure of the Hindus and the Moslems to agree that any question of a second dominion would arise. I am afraid I made a little or no impression on him and his colleagues who then asked me whether the document must be accepted as a whole since they were in favour of an immediate declaration in the terms of the first paragraph but were opposed to the right of non-accession. I told them that the document must be accepted as whole or rejected so far as the fundamental parts were concerned and that we regarded the right of non-accession as fundamental. I gathered that they would on this basis reject the document. They then raised the question of the Defence Minister and said that as they did not trust the Moslems and they imagined they did not trust the Hindus, they would want to have two Defence Advisers, one Hindu and one Moslem, whose advice the Viceroy would undertake to accept. I pointed out that it did not appear to me to be a very practical scheme, but the Viceroy would no doubt get his advice from the Executive Council and not from outside advisers, and it appeared that the advice tendered by the Moslem might not be the same as the Hindu.

127. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Sikander Hayat Khan, with the Latter Being of the Opinion That Defence Would Be the Reason for Congress Refusal and That the British Should Consider Making Maximum Concessions on the Defence Question So as to Get Congress to Accept the Proposals, 28 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I., p. 515.

Sir Sikander really came to give me the confidential information that the Working Committee of the Muslim League had accepted the scheme as a whole and were prepared to embark upon the working out of the details particularly as regard sub-clause (e). I asked him his views as regards the question of the Defence Minister and he stated that he thought it very possible that Congress would fix upon this as a reason for refusing the scheme since it would be almost impossible for them to refuse it on any other ground and that in his view it was most advisable, if possible, that we should make the maximum of concessions in the direction of giving some appearance of defence responsibility to an Indian member of the Executive, although he agreed that it was essential that the practical control of defence matters should remain in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy. He thought that the chances of getting Congress to accept would to a considerable extent depend upon whether we could make an offer in this respect appear sufficiently reasonable for them not to be able to face public opinion in turning down the whole scheme upon the excuse as regards defence.

128. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Fazlul Huq, Stating That Huq Would Not Oppose M.A. Jinnah in Any Way, 29 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I, p. 531.

This largely consisted in the recounting of condition in Bengal. He also made it quite clear that he had no intention of opposing Jinnah in any way either now or in the future and that if it came to a showdown he would follow his leadership even though he disagreed with him. He said that he would do anything he possibly could to help the scheme to get through, although he did not apparently like the provisions as they related to Bengal. He was really more concerned with the immediate situation and what was going to happen in Bengal, and the more effective use of the Indian control of Government to mobilise the Indian people.

129. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with B.R. Ambedkar and M.C. Rajah, Representatives of the Depressed Classes, with both of Them Wanting to Know whether the Depressed Classes Came within the Racial and Religious Minorities, and If They Did, What Were the Provisions for Their Protection, 30 March 1942
Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 10, Bombay, 1991, pp. 445-6.

After telling me about the conditions of the Depressed Classes, particularly in Madras and Bombay, they then went on to point out that under the system of election they would have

a very small representation only in the constituent assembly, as most of their so-called representatives would be Congressmen, and that their position would therefore be very weak. They summed up the demands that they would make to the constituent assembly and then asked me whether we considered that they came within the racial and religious minorities, to which I answered yes, and what sort of provisions were likely to be made in the Treaty for their protection. I stated that these would probably be along the lines of the League of Nations minority treaties, and if already there were special provisions in the constitution these would probably be repeated in the Treaty, and there would be some obligation to refer the matter to some outside authority in cases of dispute, the government of the Indian Union undertaking to abide by the decision so given, and that if they did not do so it would constitute a breach of Treaty, whereupon the British Government could take such steps as it considered wise in the particular circumstances. I stated that though this form of protection might no doubt seem to then inadequate, once granted the idea of self-government and self-determination for India, there was no other possible way by which we could intervene to protect any minority in India.

So far as the interim period was concerned, I pointed out that the probabilities were that some representative of the Depressed Classes would be asked to serve on the Executive Council at the Centre, and that one of the first tasks of that Council would no doubt be to make some temporary arrangements as regards the carrying on of the Provincial Governments.

Mr. Ambedkar expressed the view that they would demand to be treated as one of the major elements and to be taken into consultation by the Viceroy in the formation of the new Executive. I stated that this was not a matter for me; the Viceroy would exercise his own judgement as to whom he should consult in this matter.

Naturally they were not very happy about the whole situation, but I did not gather that they would oppose the scheme, since there was no other alternative under which they could get any greater measure of protection.

130. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Leaders of Justice Party, with the Latter Wanting to Know How the Non-accession Could Work in Their Favour, 30 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I., p. 555.

They pointed out that they represented a large proportion of the Provincial population but that owing to lack of education and of wealth and opportunity, they were unable in any election to stand up against the more wealthy and powerful Brahmin population which, though only a small percentage in numbers, have a great deal of power. They took the view that it would be in the interests of the population of Madras to secede from the main Union in order to have a Union of their own, in which they might then hope that no possible way of achieving this non-accession either by vote of the legislative assembly or by a plebiscite since in both cases the more powerful elements would be able to persuade the majority of the population to vote with them. The only method they could suggest was to set up immediately separate electorates on such a scale as to give them automatically the majority in the Province. I pointed out that this was a wholly impracticable suggestion and that it would raise the whole question of communal electorates as well, and that until such time as they could persuade the people of Madras to vote in their favour it was not possible within any democratic method at all to give them that majority which they desired. They appreciated this situation but were nevertheless

insistent that something should be done to assist them. I pointed out, as sympathetically as possible, that in existing circumstances there was nothing we could do.

They also dealt with various reforms which they desired to see in Madras but I told them that at the present moment I was concentrating on the solution of the main problem and that they must deal with the Governor or the Governor-General so far as these matters were concerned.

131. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Trying to Convince Him That Even Those Who Did Not Agree with the Scheme Should Accept It, 30 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I., p. 556.

I had a long talk with Dr. Mukherjee, who was very concerned as regards the situation in Bengal and also as to the non-accession provisions of the scheme. He expressed himself as very anxious to arrive at some agreed solution of the problem and pointed out that ex-Government in Bengal had been able to bring about a considerable assuagement of inter-communal feeling and he was anxious that nothing should be done to upset this state of affairs. I pointed out to him that any agreement must be based upon a compromise between the various communities and it was impossible for me to accept the views either of a particular community of a particular Province without jeopardising the acceptance by other communities and other Provinces. It was the diversity of interests and problems that made it difficult to come to a common agreement. I pointed out to him, as I had done to others, what the alternatives were to the acceptance of the scheme and he fully realized the gravity and the seriousness of the situation, and was, I think, convinced that it was necessary for those who did not wholly agree with the scheme to accept it in order to get a mixed representative Indian Government at the Centre and so at least start upon the solution of some of the problems.

He was very anxious about the mobilisation of Bengal for its own defence and was critical of the government of the Central Administration, especially on the question of raising a militia and the arming of the Indians.

132. Sir Stafford Cripps's Notes of His Interview with Allah Baksh, with the Latter Expressing Apprehensions about Congress Not Accepting the Scheme, 31 March 1942

TOP, Vol. I, p. 579.

He was very concerned about the prospect of a breakdown by a non-acceptance by Congress which obviously he thought was practically settled now, and made various suggestions as to what might have been done, but, as I pointed out, I had to have regard to other people's wishes as well as to any individual Indian's on a settlement, and it was not possible now to start negotiations which might last for months and months. I impressed upon him the seriousness of the situation if there were no agreement and this he fully realised. I also explained to him the situation as regards Defence, with which he fully agreed. He was anxious, I think, to do anything he could to assist in a settlement but had no very constructive suggestions as regards the matter.



133. 'More about the Scheme': Editorial Discussing the Proposals,
Welcoming the Right to Secede but Being Critical of the
Non-accession and the Defence Clauses

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 31 March 1942.

Sir Stafford Cripps has appealed to the Press to deal with the scheme of His Majesty's Government 'with the deep seriousness and responsibility which it deserves.' We may assure him that we fully realise the seriousness of the responsibility that rests on us. He knows that all India has welcomed him as the most respected man that Britain could send to this country as her ambassador. We have carefully studied the scheme and have kept in mind that it is Sir Stafford who had brought this to India for the consideration of her leaders. Yet if we cannot approve of this or that part of the scheme, he must, we think, give us credit for sincerity. No Britisher, however, well disposed towards this country, can have that concern for the freedom of our motherland as we Indians have. None can be more interested than we are for the unity of this ancient land. Destructive criticism is far from our thoughts. We hope the Lord Privy Seal will bear with us if we fully and frankly give expression to certain misgivings and offer constructive suggestions which we believe may be accepted in the way of adjustment to the main scheme itself.

The scheme may be divided into three or four parts for the purpose of discussion though we recognise, as Sir Stafford has asked us to recognise, that the scheme is to be considered as an indivisible whole. The first part deals with the proposed declaration by His Majesty's Government that India will be a Dominion with the right to secede from the Empire. But this status of India will be conferred on her not now but after the cessation of hostilities. The right to secede, conceded at last, is welcome and virtually recognizes India as a free country. But should not the declaration be made now? Why postpone it till hostilities have ceased? A short and simple Declaratory Bill may easily be passed by Parliament. We do not say this out of a feeling of distrust of British pledges and intentions. But we feel that it will produce a tremendous psychological effect on the people of India, and will create a very favourable atmosphere for a 'people's war'. It is absolutely necessary not only in the interest of India but of England as well.

The second part of the scheme relates to the future constitution of India. The Constitution is to be framed by a constituent body elected by the Provincial Assemblies on the principle of proportional representation. This substantially concedes the principles of a Constituent Assembly on which the Congress has insisted. It is, therefore welcome. The British Government will enter into a treaty with this constitution-making body. The treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the 'complete transfer' of responsibility from British to Indian hands. This accords complete equality to India and is, therefore, to be welcomed. The Treaty will make provision, in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities. Given the will to be fair and just to all, we do not think that the constitution-making body will fail to provide for the necessary safeguards to win the confidence of the minorities. And on that body itself the minorities will be adequately represented.

The third part of the scheme relates to the question of the right of the 'Provinces' to accept or not to accept the Constitution framed by the constitution-making body. This part of the scheme has filled us with serious apprehension as to what may happen in the future. What is the procedure that will be adopted to determine whether a Province did or did not accept the

Constitution? Sir Stafford Cripps explains that if 80 per cent of the members of a Provincial Legislative Assembly decided to accede, it would mean acceptance. But if even 60 p. c. did not vote for it the minority would have the right to challenge a plebiscite. The plebiscite itself would be decided by a bare majority.

Let us see how this may work out in practice. In Bengal the Moslems are about 54 p. c. of the population and the Hindus 45 p. c. or thereabout. The Moslem majority (if the Moslems vote together) in the Legislature may not be 60 p. c., but in the plebiscite, even by a bare majority, they may decide not to accede to the Indian Union or Federation. Thus a very substantial minority will be coerced into submission in a matter of vital importance. It may be said, why assume that all the Moslems will vote one way? But we all know from bitter experience that communal fanaticism may easily be roused in such a matter. The slogan of Moslem Raj, and in the case of Hindu majority Provinces, that of Hindu Raj, may easily influence the passion of the voters. We have seen how the so-called Communal Award has driven many nationalist Moslems into the fanatical section. The danger is not only great to the Hindus but to the Moslems as well. For in the Hindu majority Provinces, the minority community may find itself coerced.

It is, therefore, in the interest of the majority and the minority communities that we suggest that an outside body like the League of Nations should decide whether there are just and legitimate reasons for a Province to refuse to accede to the Union. If the League of Nations solution is good enough for making a decision on the adequacy or otherwise of safeguards for minorities, we do not know why in a far more important question a minority, and in some Provinces a big minority, should be allowed to be coerced, in some cases again, by a bare majority.

The opinion of Sir Stafford that it is only 'contiguous Provinces' that could possibly think of refusing to accede is nothing but an *ipse dixit*. It will not be binding on the 'Provinces.' His further statement that the British Government would not undertake to finance non-acceding Provinces which were not financially self-supporting may not be sufficiently discouraging. For other non-acceding Provinces may somehow undertake that responsibility.

The right to accede or not to accede has been given to the Provinces in the name of self-determination. But there can be no self-determination in breaking up the unity of India. As in other Federations, in the present scheme it is provided that if a Province decides to accede and joins the Union, it will not be entitled to secede later on. Is this not an infringement of the right of self-determination? A Hindu wife has no self-determination to separate from her husband. But Christian and Moslem wives have the right to divorce. It may be all honey at the beginning and for some years, but is it not a negation of self-determination, in other word coercion, to compel the continuance of partnership when all the honey has gone, leaving nothing but poison and bitterness? So there is no immutability in the principle of self-determination.

It has further to be remembered that the existing delimitation of the Provinces is more or less arbitrary. It is based neither on linguistic, nor religious nor any other commonly understood foundations. To give such Provinces the so-called self-determination has neither reason nor sanctity behind it.

The decision to accede or not to accede to the Indian Union, under the present circumstances, can only rest on communal considerations. The recognition of the right even now will be the signal for the spread of fanaticism, and by the time the constitution-making body has reported, the country will be ripe for a civil war. Instead of one India, we will have two or more. And self-determination will have to be granted to Princely India too.

We want the freedom of India, but India's unity is no less important than her freedom, for without unity the freedom itself may be easily lost if it is acquired at all.

As to the constitution of the present Government of India, the scheme leaves it to the Viceroy to settle the composition of his Executive Council. He may Indianise it, but with the exception of the Defence portfolio which must be held by a non-Indian. We are sorry to say that we are not convinced by the argument of Sir Stafford that as a corollary to Britain's responsibility for the defence of India, the Defence portfolio must be held by a non-Indian. We do not know why this should be so. Are we Indians not as much interested in the defence of our country as the British Government? The American General MacArthur is the Commander-in-Chief of the Australian forces. But the Australian Defence Minister is neither an American nor a Britisher but an Australian. Is it the case of the Viceroy that in all India he is not likely to find an Indian who will be patriotic enough and sensible enough to work in close co-operation with, say, General Wavell, our present C-in-C, the British General Staff and the British Cabinet. He will be able to create an enthusiasm for the war among his countrymen which no non-Indian, however able, may do. It is, therefore, not only in the interest of the British war effort but the Indian war effort as well that the Defence portfolio should be held by an Indian.

134. 'Cripps Proposals and Our Tasks', a Circulated Party Letter of the CPI, Urging Congress–Muslim League Unity and a Political Settlement on the Basis of Cripps Proposals

Documents of the Communist Movement in India, Vol. IV, Edited by Jyoti Basu, Calcutta, 1997, pp. 373–7.

(A Circulated Party Letter of the Communist Party of India, 6 April 1942.)

We are printing below a statement drafted by the Polit-Bureau immediately after the publication of the draft proposals of the British War Cabinet. It lays down generally our approach to the proposals. Since then the press representing the various parties has put a barrage of opposition to these proposals. At the time of writing, the resolutions of the Congress Working Committee or of the Muslim League is not to hand. But it is expected that both these bodies would criticize the proposals, suggest alternatives and keep the door open for negotiations, which may go on for a week or so more.

The Test

What should be our attitude and our slogans in view of this not altogether unexpected development? The line indicated in this draft statement is generally sound and continues to hold good. Our lead to the country and to the great political parties, especially to the Congress and the Muslim League is: 'United on the basis of common tasks, common agreements to achieve a settlement on the basis of the Cripps proposals, using your united strength to get such adjustment on the issue of defence as would really and freely enable us to mobilise and arm our people for a total national defence.'

Not a Charter of Freedom

The proposals fall into two parts. The part dealing with the future Indian constitution is certainly not our Charter of freedom. It does not give complete independence, nor does it give us Constituent Assembly. It gives no freedom to the States' people, nor does it satisfactorily solve

the communal question. But do we expect our freedom's charter to be drafted in London by British War Cabinet which is yet dominated by imperialists? Obviously not. Who does not know that this neatly balanced scheme, though it talks of sovereignty, constituent assembly, right of secession etc, leaves loopholes for the reactionary forces in the country to assert themselves so that through their help British finance capital may yet remain supreme? The point is not to examine these proposals with a magnifying glass of constitutional law. The point is not to examine whether they concede us full independence or not. Such an examination is very soon made and the result would be that they are not even 'a post-dated cheque' for independence.

But a Lever to Win It

What we have to ask ourselves is this: do these proposals reflect a changed relation between the people and imperialism? And the answer is: yes, they do. They are not a resuscitation of the hated August offer. That position is dead and gone. Imperialists have been forced to move a step or two forward. Not because there is a change of heart, but because there is a change of situation, but because they have to recede today before the growing power of the people. It is not 'anxiety' of the British and the Indian peoples, but their pressure, their growing determination to release people's power to defeat the fascist enemy of humanity that has forced the imperialists to step back a little. The British rulers say to us: We are pledged and determined to give you a self-governing status, with a sovereignty in no way inferior to ours. We are pledged and determined to set going a democratic process of constitution-making immediately after the cessation of hostilities. We say, very good. Your pledge is a good basis for a settlement to meet the immediate emergency. Why do we say that? Have we suddenly developed a faith in the pledges of the imperialist rulers? Nothing of the sort. We say so because we know that behind the pledge of the British Government stands the growing power of the British people. We say so because we see the pledge against the background of the world war of people's liberation. We know very well that the freedom of the country will not be shaped by the neatly-balanced schemes of the British War Cabinet but by our own actions in this mighty people's struggle, but the actions of our great allies—the Soviet and Chinese peoples, the British and American peoples. The freedom of India as a whole from imperialist rule, the freedom from oppression for all the nationalities and communities that inhabit India, the guarantee of their full, free and unhampered development, the freedom and democracy to the peoples of the States—all these can and have to be won through our own united struggle. It can neither be made or unmade by any preconceived schemes made by others.

Test of Practical Proposals

The real test to be applied to these proposals is not whether it concedes independence or whether it solves the communal or States peoples' problem. The real test is: does it give us enough freedom here and now to mobilise and arm the people for the country's defence, and to reorganise the economy of the land so as to feed and protect the people and to supply the needs of war? The actual practical proposals about the establishment of the National Government are not yet clearly known to the public. But what is generally proposed is a completely Indianised Council with Congress-League majority, capable of functioning as a responsible body, the Viceroy not interfering as long as the Council is agreed on their decision. The main hurdle is the control and responsibility over defence. Sir Stafford has categorically stated that the British Government are not prepared to hand over the responsibility of the defence to the Indian National Government. The Commander-in-Chief would remain a member of the Viceroy's

Executive Council. Obviously, this position is untenable. If there is a real National Cabinet you cannot take away defence from its collective authority. There cannot be any valid reason for defence being made an exception.

Solve 'Defence Hurdle' By Congress-League Unity

What should be our attitude towards the proposals as they are known now? What slogans do we popularise in our agitation now in this week when the settlement is on the anvil? In our meetings and demonstrations, in our public utterances we should state that these proposals, inadequate though they are, are yet a suitable basis for negotiations for a settlement. These proposals represent a retreat of imperialism and an advance of the peoples' forces. But to use them, to transform them into an effective lever capable of solving the tasks which face our nation today—this is the urgent need. By themselves, as they stand, they do not envisage a really national government, with full competence over every sphere of administration and of the conduct of war. Defence is being sought to be taken away from its control. Therefore we say: Let the Congress and the League UNITEDLY press for this demand. Let them come together on the basis of a platform of action declaring their common determination to head jointly a really national government, to defend the country, to protect the people, to win India's liberation in common with the freedom-loving peoples of the world. What is urgently needed in this critical hour is a Congress-League agreement, not one merely to share out seats in the Viceroy's Council, but a broad-based, generous political agreement which will restore full mutual confidence between the masses of the Hindus and Muslims, which will enable their joint struggle against the aggressor and the joint march towards freedom.

Basis for Congress-League Agreement

What should be basis of such an agreement? Nothing but the very urgent and immediate tasks that face our people in this grave emergency. These tasks are:

1. Defend India against the aggressor, line up with the progressive peoples fighting to destroy fascism and to create a world in which every people is ensured independence and democratic liberties;
2. Jointly strive for, and man, a National Government having full competence over all spheres of administration, including defence;
3. Intensify India's industrial and agricultural production to meet the needs of war and to feed and give work to the peoples;
4. Arm the people;
5. PRESERVE AND EXTEND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, enabling a total people's mobilisation and unity to strengthen the National Government in its tasks and to smash any efforts at its sabotage from whatever quarter they may come;
6. CEMENT COMMUNAL UNITY, by declaring that the issues of Akhand Hindustan and Pakistan would not be prejudged now, but the Congress should pledge itself to a declaration that in the free and united India of its conception, there would be complete autonomous states, each of which will be comprised of a major nationality having a common language, history, tradition, common territory, psychological make-up and economic life. Each such autonomous state will have the right of secession from united India, which would be a voluntary union of free and equal autonomous democratic states. The Congress should further pledge that interspersed small minorities who cannot

be given territory will have their rights re: language, culture, education, etc. completely guaranteed. All special rights and privileges of communities and nationalities would be abolished, ensuring that there is no oppression of one community or nationality by another. SUCH A DECLARATION IS ESSENTIAL AT THIS STAGE TO BE THE BASIS OF A CONGRESS-LEAGUE AGREEMENT. Only on the basis of such an agreement would it be possible for the Indian people to counteract and nullify the implications which are implicit in the scheme of the British draft declaration and to forge real unity and amity between communities for the struggle for a free India.

A Congress-League unity on the basis of the above points will not only enable us to achieve a favourable settlement which is urgently needed now, to enable us to rouse the people and to defend the country but it will also lead the people in their irresistible march towards freedom.

Our Slogans

Our slogans, therefore, are:

proposals and to win National Government;
 WE DEMAND CONGRESS-LEAGUE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT at the Centre, with competence over every sphere of administration, including defence;
 WE WANT A FIRM BASIS FOR COMMUNAL UNITY. Put aside the question of Akhand Hindustan and Pakistan for the present.
 Resolve that there will be no oppression of one community by another in Free India.
 We appeal to all the great parties to unite in common patriotic endeavour to defend our Motherland and its people. Such unity will ensure a settlement here and now which is today the urgent need both for the Indian as well as the British people.
 Therefore, hold meetings and demonstrations demanding these things. Pass resolutions on these lines and send them to the press.

E. RESPONSES IN THE PRESS TO CRIPPS PROPOSALS, BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS, AND THE SUBSEQUENT COLLAPSE OF THE MISSION

135. 'Will States People Have a Voice in the Constituent Assembly?':
 Letter to the Editor Suggesting the Importance of Having
 Elected Representatives from the Princely States in the Proposed
 Constituent Assembly
Sunday Standard (Bombay), 5 April 1942.

Sir, —Perhaps before these lines appear in the print, Sir Stafford Cripps will have decided one way or the other whether a Crown declaration on the lines of the British Cabinet's proposals should be made or not, but whatever it is a few points require clarification.

The position of Indian States and the treaties entered into by the rulers with the paramount power give the British Government no option but to take upon themselves the responsibility of protecting sovereign rights of States, and their right to determine the form of constitution they accept and enact for their subjects, and their willingness or otherwise for accession to the Indian Union. The procedure to be adopted by the British Government is plain—inviting

the rulers to nominate their representatives on the basis of population to sit in the Constituent Assembly. The procedure that will be adopted by some of the Rulers is also clear—they will leave the States peoples' wishes entirely out of consideration. Those States who have legislatures can (or is it should?) send representatives of these legislature to sit in the Constituent Assembly, but as almost all the Indian State Legislatures are either monopolised by or dominated by nominated elements, the voice of a large section of Indian masses who owe allegiance to State Rulers will not be heard.

The position of the States after a Constitution is framed and accepted and is working, also requires clarification. We can only assume that only those States who are compelled by practical considerations will adhere to the Indian Union, the others preferring to retain their sovereignty and autocracy. The major practical consideration will be one of defence against possible aggression. All the maritime States, by virtue of their exposure to attack by an outside force, may decide to come into the scheme, as they would find themselves unable to maintain a large modern army, navy and air force to defend their territories. Many of the financially backward States also can be expected to give their assent, but there are States, and I can visualise groups of States also, who, due to their geographical position and financial strength, may find no reasons at all to join the Union. In the case of these States, and they may contain more than half the total State population of India, whom will they owe allegiance to? To the Crown or the Indian Union? If they want to recognise only the British Government as their heads, what will be the relationship between the Crown representative of the States and the Indian Union Government?

These may perhaps be points for the consideration of the Constitution framers after the cessation of hostilities, and not for laymen like me. But I am certain that many subjects of Indian States, like myself, felt that a Constitution that may affect them and their interests is going to be framed without their effective voice. We admit, in consideration of their present treaty obligations, the British Government may not be able to ask the States to send elected representatives of the peoples to the Constituent Assembly, but they can surely advise the rulers to give in to this principle when nominating their representatives.

136. 'Disquieting News': Editorial Speculating That the Proposals Might Be Rejected by the Major Political Parties and Arguing Forcefully for the Indianization of Defence

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1 April 1942

News from New Delhi is disquieting. Both the Congress and the Muslim League are reported to have taken a definite stand that the responsibility for defence must be transferred immediately to the control of the National Government that is proposed to be set up during the interim period. For the past several days we have urged in these columns that more importance attaches, from the point of view of popular psychology and the urgent requirements of the situation, to the nature and character of the interim machinery than to any declaration of future policy. It is not surprising that the leaders of the Congress should also be thinking in these terms. In this crisis when the enemy is at India's gates and excitement runs so high, the people are not in a mood to settle down to proper assessment of future values. They are inclined to look upon the immediate transference of power as the supreme and crucial test. Sir Stafford Cripps's brilliant exposition of the draft declaration, in so far as it affects the future of the land, has been extremely

helpful and all we can suggest on this point is that an exhaustive explanatory memorandum, in terms of the Lord Privy Seal's commentary, should be appended to the declaration. That would go a long way in removing apprehensions or dispelling doubts. This procedure is not without precedent. For it may be recalled that when the Government of India Bill of 1935 was under discussion in Parliament it was prefaced by a brief explanatory memorandum on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

We are afraid, however, Sir Stafford Cripps's explanation of the proposed transitional arrangements is inadequate and disappointing. In respect of the question of defence it is halting and half-hearted. Nobody has suggested that Indian defence should be an isolated unit independent of or separate from the grand strategy of the Allied nations. Nobody has suggested that there should be an overhaul of the Indian Command. But we do not see why, along with other portfolios of the Central Government, Defence should not be transferred to a National Government. Sir Stafford Cripps referred to the Australian military strategy and pointed out that it was, more or less, under American control. We understand that point. The necessity of Allied collaboration in different theatres of the war is so imperative that there can be no question of military or strategic isolationism for any of the United Nations. But it is quite a different thing to tell us that the direction and control of Indian Defence shall lie with the British Government. This is subordination to which the country should not be called upon to submit, particularly when it is proposed that the responsibility for organising the military, moral and material resources of the nation should devolve on leaders of public opinion.

There is, of course, force in the Lord Privy Seal's contention that India will have the right to be represented on the British War Cabinet, the War Councils of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. That, however, is a long-distance cementing bond that does not make an immediate psychological appeal to the Indian mind. It feels that it must have a direct and effective voice in the control of policy at home. In a war emergency defence overshadows every aspect of the internal administration and it would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for even a Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to go about the country and rouse enthusiasm among the masses unless he can tell them that as their accredited leader and spokesman he is armed with adequate powers to take any measures for the defence of the land and to resist Fascist aggression. We believe, despite Sir Stafford Cripps's emphatic suggestion to the contrary, that he is capable, by his prestige at home and abroad, by his authority in the counsels of the British Government and by his 'suicidal courage', of incorporating adjustments to make the scheme acceptable to progressive Indian opinion. Sir Stafford cannot afford to precipitate a breakdown in the face of the immediate peril. For India as well as for the Allied nations it would be a terrible calamity if on this point the Lord Privy Seal's high mission is allowed to be frustrated. We appeal to him and Indian leaders to sit together and evolve a formula acceptable to India and helpful to the cause which we all hold dear.

We think that we should address ourselves to one or two other points in the draft declaration. It has been a mistake to emphasise Dominion Status in connection with the scheme foreshadowing an Indian Union equal in every respect with Britain and the Dominions in every aspect of its domestic and external affairs. That indeed is reproduction of the now-famous Balfour phraseology, but the events of the last two years or more have robbed it of its social or political content. A new status is being evolved both for Britain and the Dominions and to that status India is proposed to be admitted on a footing of perfect equality. With the right accorded to the proposed Indian Union to determine its relations with the member-States of

the Commonwealth and to sever, if need be, British connection, the country may proceed to occupy the position of a fully independent State. That position or status is not enjoyed by all the Dominions in terms of the Statute of Westminster. Therefore, instead of calling India a Dominion or laying undue stress on Dominion Status the draft declaration should have announced that India would be a sovereign State on Egyptian analogy *minus* the Imperial reservations. This is an error of phraseology which had better be rectified and we commend it most earnestly to Sir Stafford Cripps's consideration.

As to the right given to the British Indian Provinces to decide not to federate, we must say that the possibility of different Unions being created in India is not, at least in theory, to be ruled out. Sir Stafford Cripps should have admitted it with that refreshing candour which has throughout characterized his utterances. On our part we see in it, however, no concession to the demand for *Pakistan* repeatedly made by Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. The British Government have set their face resolutely against the division of India into independent communal zones. They have further refused to concede the right to the Muslims as Muslims or the Hindus *quo* Hindus to accede or not to accede to the Union. The right given is on a Provincial or territorial basis as opposed to one of religion or race. While the theoretical possibility of different Unions being established is not discounted, there are certain very important practical considerations which would definitely militate against it. The internal economic situation, the modern military requirements and the needs for social reconstruction in the light of international fellowship are factors which would weigh heavily against those who stand for the vivisection of India.

In this connection we invite public attention to Joseph Stalin's Report to the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets made in 1922, where the Russian leader propagated the idea of Soviet amalgamation and denounced the separationist tendencies. Speaking about the right of secession given to the constituent units or border regions of the Soviet Federation, Joseph Stalin said that the question was not of the indubitable rights of nations but of the interests of the masses of the people both at the Centre and in the border regions and that the interests of the masses rendered the demand for secession of the border regions a profoundly anti-revolutionary one. The seceded regions, he added, would fall into bondage to international Imperialism. The British Indian Provinces and all the communities concerned should bear in mind this solemn warning of one of the world's greatest statesmen and strategists.

137. 'The Reaction': Editorial Pointing Out the Defects in the Scheme as Mentioned in the British and the Indian Press

The Bombay Chronicle, 1 April 1942.

The defects of Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals have not escaped the notice of impartial critics even in Britain Lord Wedgwood discovers two snags in them. One is about the immediate reconstruction of the Central Government and he wonders if the mere 'association of Indians' in organising defence 'is enough to instil into them the same feeling that there is in China and Russia.' Mere association has not been particularly successful in Burma. A worse snag he observes, is that he does not see the Princes in the picture. 'If they do not come into the Union' he says, 'they are disunited all over India and we cannot protect them if the Indian Government chooses to annex them.' But it is not Britain's way to look far ahead. For the present she welcomes the occasions to intervene for the 'protection' of the Princes. The 'Manchester Guardian' discovers another 'breach in Indian unity' in the option given to any province to stand

out of the Indian Union. Mr. Feaner Brockway, a veteran champion of India, goes further and remarks: 'In regard to the future proposals the danger is that they will intensify and perpetuate disunity. It is a disastrous prospect to think of Ulsters scattered on the body of India, I would have preferred the code of minority rights to be guarded in India as in other countries by an international authority, which must emerge after the war.' Arbitration by a disinterested party acceptable to the parties in dispute is a better way wherever possible. Where there is a will there are several ways to help unity.

Comments

The Indian National press is naturally more critical, has noted more defects in the scheme and has made more severe comments on it but has rightly made constructive suggestions to make it generally acceptable. *The Hindu* rightly point out that while the British declaration begins by saying that it aims is to set up an Indian union, its tenor and likely consequence are in 'favour of setting up a number of political entities—some multiple states, some unitary—which will not be integrated into the well knit system making for the unity, the strength and the happiness of the Indian people who are one and indivisible.' The British offer has thus 'shortcomings which must be remedied if it is not to fail short of Britain's own declared aim.' Leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the papers generally supporting, view with profound distrust the disruptive tendencies in the scheme. Mr. N. C. Kelkar asks 'Must India prepare herself for disintegration like China'? Bhai Paramanand is more emphatic and says that the Mahasabha shall have to fight the new scheme. The Muslim League paper, the *Star of India* says, 'the scheme falls short of what the people of India, Hindus and Muslims have demanded as essential'. The Working Committee of the Congress and the League have not yet published their final decisions. But the reports so far available of their meetings are far from favourable to the scheme.

Vital Point

Sir Stafford's talk to the press conference on Tuesday has not appreciably improved the situation. He reiterated the British Government's decision that Defence must be reserved subject in any circumstances. And as regards other Departments he said that the Cabinet 'could not be reconstructed without the resignation of old members.' This may mean that the reconstruction of the Cabinet on the national and popular lines is at the mercy of its present members. But that is only another way of saying that there is going to be no fundamental change in the Central Government. It is an emphatic No to the universal demand for a National Government. On the other hand whatever concessions the Congress and the League might make with regard to the procedure for formulating a Swaraj scheme after the war, both bodies insist on a transference of real power to a National Government. The demand is not merely a point of honour, though even as such it would be thoroughly legitimate. It is essential to enable the Government to rouse the people and exploit to the full the moral and material resources of the country for its defence. The present Government are admittedly unable to do that. Nor will they make room for a National Government that can. On this vital point, apart from others, the deadlock is as complete as ever. It remains to be seen how Sir Stafford propose to solve it. We must repeat our suggestion that if the Congress and the League remain absolutely united in this demand and its responsibilities, he will have to find a suitable solution.



138. 'Sir Stafford Cripps's Proposals': Editorial Doubting the Capacity of the British Government to Defend India, and Expressing Apprehension That the Integrity of India Would Be Endangered by the Proposals

The Leader, 1 April 1942.

The 'just and final' solution which his Majesty's Government have proposed for the consideration of India through their ambassador Sir Stafford Cripps has been published and within the next few days it will be possible to know more accurately than at present the reactions to it of the various political parties. The method by which the future constitution is to be framed has been indicated, and national opinion will feel that in conceding the right of self-determination to the provinces and forming themselves, if they so desire into a separate federation, his Majesty's Government have gone far in the direction of encouraging centrifugal tendencies. It is not possible, however, to visualize all the forces that may be in operation in the post-war period and the more immediate issue before the country is that of transference of authority from the present bureaucratic Government to a government commanding the confidence of the main elements in the political life of the country. On that point the proposals are vague and halting. His Majesty's Government state that they will remain, for the period of the war, responsible for defence. If the record of his Majesty's Government in the Far Eastern theatre of war had been such as to inspire confidence in their capacity to effectively defend India, we could have understood the objection to transference of defence to an untried authority in India but, unfortunately, the failure of British Governmental authorities at Singapore has made many Indians naturally feel that for their effective protection it is essential that they should have this vital portfolio in the hands of an Indian commanding the confidence of the country. Australia has at all events the U. S. A. to look to for support but we are not so luckily situated. We are, therefore, disappointed at the fact that the interim arrangements contemplated have been made dependent on the acceptance of principles of the proposals regarding the future which Sir Stafford Cripps has brought to this country and that it is not contemplated to transfer defence during the period of the war into Indian hands. The Bombay Non-Party Conference has stated that it has no objection to the position of the Commander-in-Chief being safeguarded. With that qualification, it passes our comprehension why it should be impossible for his Majesty's Government, if they are solicitous of securing Indian cooperation, to place the responsibility of defending their country upon Indian shoulders. There will, therefore, be general criticism against Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals in this respect. The provision for the representation of India in the War Cabinet and the Pacific War Council and in the peace conference will be of greater constitutional value if India has a national government of its own.

The principle of self-determination looks no doubt excellent in theory but its too rigid application in the last war to the countries of South-East Europe did not make for peace....

At a time when the tendency of the world is towards larger units and when we are told that the best minds of Britain are thinking in terms of a federal union, it is rather surprising that a left wing leader has allowed himself to sponsor a scheme which will, if certain eventualities happen, vivisect India. We are, therefore, of the view that the proposals regarding self-determination of the provinces require revision. Every patriotic Indian is most anxious that the integrity of India should be preserved and we share the apprehensions of those who feel that the proposals may endanger it.

We do not yet know what the decision of the major political parties is going to be. A raging and tearing propaganda for or against Pakistan with a view to securing the assent or dissent of provinces for an Indian union will at this juncture, when the country may have to face air attacks and even may, perhaps, have to go through an ordeal of an invasion by land or sea can do us no good. The duty of our countrymen is to be wisely organised and constructive rather than merely destructive at this juncture. It is not necessary in order to be helpful in give our blessing to all parts of the scheme which has been placed before the public by Sir Stafford Cripps. Helpfulness is rather an attitude of mind. In the delicate negotiations which we find are still continuing in Delhi it is cultivation of this virtue that will enable us to tide over successfully the difficult times that lie ahead of us. We do not wish to say anything more at this juncture as we wish to reserve a more detailed examination of the scheme and its implications for subsequent comments. The scheme is like a curate's egg, good in parts but positively bad in others. And something [more] than a mere yes or no will be needed to meet the situation that it has created in the country. We hope that the negotiations which are going on will bear fruit and that Sir Stafford Cripps will succeed in his noble mission.

139. 'Essential Changes': Editorial Arguing That There Was Unanimity among the Indian Political Forces Both on the Immediate Reconstruction of the Central Government, as well as the Indianization of Defence

The Bombay Chronicle, 2 April 1942

That both the major political parties in India have so far not expressed their opinion about Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals is clearly indicative of a deadlock and of attempts still being made to resolve it. It is by now an open secret that the Congress opposes certain features of the proposed Constituent Assembly which, in the words of Mr. Fenner Brockway open a prospect of 'Ulsters scattered on the body of India.' The Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikhs and the Liberals and several other organisations also oppose these features. However, it is felt by many that the proposals about the Constituent Assembly are capable of being modified in the light of public criticism, particularly if a settlement is possible on the immediate changes in the Central Government. Indian leaders are, therefore, most exercised about these changes, if only because they vitally affect the conduct of the war.

United Demand

In this connection it needs to be reiterated that all the important political parties are agreed on the demand for a National Government. Even the Non-Party Conference held at Delhi in February unanimously adopted a resolution demanding that 'during the period of the war the Governor General's Executive Council shall be reconstructed as a truly National Government functioning on the basis of joint and collective responsibility and consisting entirely of non-officials enjoying public confidence and in charge of all portfolios, subject to responsibility to the Crown and in regard to defence without prejudice in the position of the Commander-in-Chief as the executive head of the Defence force.' We have often been told that only lack of agreement among Indian parties about any demand prevents its being conceded. But with regard to the immediate reconstruction of the Central Government there is substantial unanimity in India. Yet we are told that this is a special responsibility of the Viceroy and nobody else can

meddle with it. Surely, such an attitude is ill calculated to help a settlement. War is no argument for postponing reconstruction. It is rather a potent argument for hastening reconstruction on national lines.

Defence under Indian Control

Naturally the most important item in the reconstruction is Defence and all parties are keen on its being in charge of a popular Indian leader. And the demand is made on the ground that under an Indian Defence Minister the Department will be far more efficient than it has proved to be so far. Moving the resolution of the Non-Party Conference quoted above, Dr. M. R. Jayakar, who is certainly not an uncharitable critic of Government, made certain remarks which deserve to be quoted. Referring to the surrender of Singaopre, he said:

‘We have the surrendering Commander’s testimony that there was no food, no water, and no munitions—a case of three “no’s”...What guarantee does the Government of India give to the people of this country that these three “no’s” would not be repeated in India, if the occasion arose? We do not want the Malayan state of affairs to be repeated here. I say, with all the responsibility of my words, that the Government has proved itself utterly incompetent to conduct a big war like this without the co-operation of the people. We, therefore, tell the Government: “Move aside, we shall take charge of the conduct of our defence before it is too late.”’

Referring to the same point in his presidential address Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru explained why an Indian Defence Minister is indispensable at the present juncture. He said:

‘The fact of the matter is that under the present system you may collect money, you may enlist men in the army but you do not touch the pride of the country or evoke that enthusiasm for common service or those sentiments of national pride or that sense of concern for the safety of the freedom of the country which can only be created when the country knows that the men at top are its own men.’

It is, therefore, quite natural that Sir Tej Bahadur and Dr. Jayakar, though they think ‘it would be a tragedy if Sir Stafford Cripps’ mission failed,’ insist never-the-less that ‘Indian opinion cannot look upon any transfer of power as real unless the Government of India is so constituted as to give an effective share to the country in the management of its defence and thus to increase immensely and without delay, the military strength of the country to defeat the threatened aggression.’ We agree that a failure of the mission will be a tragedy and share these leaders’ hope that a satisfactory formula will be devised in respect of the Defence portfolio before it is too late. There should no longer be any distrust of Indians. It is true, as the ‘Washington Post’ says, that ‘defence is no longer an Indian problem.’ It has to be related to the common war effort of the United Nations. But there is no reason why India should not in this matter, be placed on the same footing as any of the Dominions, for instance. Proofs and assurances of whole-hearted co-operation, such as the Australian Premier has given that neither the Australian Government nor Parliament would interfere in the military direction of the war, will not be lacking from an Indian Cabinet. It is clear that Sir Stafford’s hands are completely tied in respect of the immediate reconstruction of the Central Government. *The Statesman* rightly warns Britain that ‘success will elude Sir Stafford unless he is empowered to use very different language, accompanied by striking changes that will make it clear that the old regime is ended and new men and new methods are at work.’ The old regime must change.



140. 'Call for Statesmanship': Editorial Welcoming the Decision of Sir Stafford Cripps to Postpone His Departure and Hoping That There Would Be a Settlement

Ismaili (Bombay), 5 April 1942.

On Thursday Sir Stafford Cripps announced his decision to postpone his departure from India. On all hands this is hailed as a welcome assurance of the British Government's genuine desire to reach a settlement on the Indian question. Hopes of such an understanding were receding in recent days, but Sir Stafford Cripps' declaration has given them a new fillip. Here is an opportunity for India's leaders to show real statesmanship, and, by adjusting their differences, help to make possible the self-government which Britain has offered India, soon after the war.

When Mr. Churchill announced the Cripps Mission, he made it clear that while the British Government were determined that the majority would not be allowed to have its way to the point of precipitating civil war, the minorities would equally not be allowed to exercise an indefinite veto on the country's political progress. That, to all practical men, seemed a reasonable formula and the spirit of this formula is reflected in the British Cabinet's proposals. The constitution-making body which Sir Stafford Cripps visualises after the war has its prototype in the constituent assembly demanded by the Indian National Congress; at the same time, the principle of self-determination, for the recognition of which India's nationalist leaders have pressed for many years, is conceded by the proposals. That self-determination principle will apply to the provincial units when the question of joining the Indian Union comes up for discussion. To the broad principles of this scheme it is difficult to find valid grounds for objection.

Judging from recent developments, discussion appears to have hinged largely on the question of the concessions to be made during the war. What form is the Central Government to take? Are the popular ministries to return in the provinces? Will defence be in charge of an Indian Minister of the Central Government? These and other pertinent questions are now engaging the attention of our political leaders. The question of defence seems to be the main bugbear. It is suggested, not without reason, that in times of war Government is primarily a matter of defence, and if defence is to be taken out of Indian hands then the Central Government will in reality exercise very little power. That is a valid objection, though on the other hand the practical difficulties of placing defence entirely in the hands of an Indian Minister will be recognized. On questions like strategy and the actual conduct of war, the military authorities are obviously the best judges. At the same time, there are good reasons why other aspects of defence, like recruitment, equipment and supplies should be placed in charge of an Indian Minister. Nobody but an Indian representative can mobilize the resources of our country in men, money and materials to any effective purpose.

Here obviously is a basis for compromise, and Sir Stafford Cripps has expressed his readiness to consider all proposals. Here again is a chance for Indian statesmanship to show its calibre. A formula whereby the Indian Defence Minister will leave strategy and the conduct of war to the Commander-in-Chief while making subjects like recruitment, equipment and supplies his main charges, may well offer the best practical solution. It is a solution, we feel, which, given goodwill, would be acceptable to the British Government, and it is an arrangement to which India's leaders can advantageously subscribe.

The present is a time fraught with big issues, and it calls for big men with big minds. No narrow partisan spirit should be allowed to obscure the main interests of the country; no selfish

motives should be allowed to triumph at the cost of India's general good. Within those ideals there is room for statesmanship, and if India's leaders will bend their energies to discovering a basis for agreement among themselves, the way will be open to full self-government for the country on the cessation of hostilities. Here is a chance which may never recur. Here surely is an opportunity which India's leaders would do well to seize with both hands and capitalise to the best advantage of the country. But this, we repeat, can only be done if the problem is approached not from a narrow selfish viewpoint, but in a statesmanlike spirit. India does not lack able leaders. Let some at least among them show they can rise to the stature of statesmen.

Failure at this juncture would discredit both the country and its leaders. We cannot afford the luxury of failure which may put back the clock of our progress indefinitely. In this time of crisis, all men of goodwill should combine to make possible without delay the fruition of India's political ideals. We have cherished the ambition of self-government for many years, and the history of the last few years is a story of lost opportunities. Let us be careful at the present moment not to add yet another item to our long list of failures. With courage and confidence, and with goodwill for all men, our political leaders may yet be able to forge new links of friendship between the main elements in our public life, and thereby advance India's interests and the interests of her people to the common good of mankind.

141. 'Thro' Politicles': Article Written by 'Sengol' Commenting on the Disruptive Potentials of the Proposals and Insisting That India Is a Nation and Not a Sub-continent, as Claimed by L.S. Amery

Hubli Gazette (Hubli, Distt. Dharwar), 5 April 1942.

The Draft Declaration by the British Government for the settlement of the Indian political issue is now before us. Opinions have so far been expressed individually, but reasonable bodies of Indian political opinions are still engaged in discussions. Their reactions will probably be before the public by the time these lines appear in print.

Judging for ourselves, the first paragraph of the draft, which may be called the preamble declares, in clearer terms than before, the right of India to the attainment of the full equality of status within the British Commonwealth.

It is also laid down precisely, how the creation of a New Indian Union is envisaged immediately on the cessation of the war. The usual ceremonial phraseology associated with the status of the United Kingdom and the Dominions viz. 'owing common allegiance to the crown' is included in the definition. We may readily state at once that this is only sentimental. After all, the symbolic allegiance by the Dominions of Canada, Australia and Ireland has not at any time been seen perceptibly to influence the dominion's own national interests if and when they came into contact or conflict with those of the United Kingdom.

It must therefore, be recognised that every dominion exercises its rights and discretion unreservedly, in spite of any possible repercussions elsewhere. The West Minister Statute lays down not only the right of secession but also, the right of legislating measures which may be repugnant to the legislations of the Mother Parliament.

However, the fact remains that India's 'allegiance' to the British Crown will be an empty terminology. India, no doubt will wish for British alliance, but allegiance-duty of subject to sovereign or government as per Oxford Concise Dictionary will be far from factual. For, has not Mr. Amery-the constitutional pandit that he is for propounding British constitution and

Governments-said, only sometime last month, in a speech on the British Commonwealth of Nations, that India, on account of its own distinct cultural and racial differences with the other partners of the commonwealth, cannot really be admitted to such an equality of status? We may take it that he represents a substantial body of public opinion in England, and probably in the other Dominion also. Hence the Indian National Congress insists that India must be declared an Independent Country with free scope to vote for British Alliance on mutual aspirations.

Sir Stafford Cripps in the interview to the press representatives has declared that the right of secession is recognised by the formulation of the proposal of free partnership in the Commonwealth, in no way inferior to any other member, etc. In that case, it is obviously needless to insist upon 'allegiance' of India rather than plainly conceding free and full scope for alliance and friendship of India with Britain. A mere insistence upon forcing down certain notions far from realities, not only keeps up non-acquiescence, but it will only be playing the role of the blind man in the story asserting that an Elephant is only as round as a pillar.

The other paragraphs and clauses, except the last one of the draft proposals, deal with the methods for setting up a Constitution Making body. This is promised immediately after the secession of war and by holding fresh elections to the Provincial Legislatures. This constitution-making body will not only draft the constitution of the New Indian Union, but it will also be the body which will negotiate the treaty with his Majesty's Government on the basis of conclusions arrived at.

But the bones of contention in this part of the draft are principally two:-

The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution, to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides, and such provinces being allowed to form separate federations or unions, etc, gives cause to entertain a fear that Pakistan is conceded implicitly or at least there is an attempt at encouraging the disruptive elements to bring about a Balkanisation of the Country. India is no doubt a country of vast millions of different castes and creeds but, the National India rightly believes that irrespective of caste or creed all are the sons of the soil and owe allegiance to the Nation, keeping their religious convictions for personal conscience. The disruptive forces working in the country, for power politics, having been thwarted in their nefarious machinations to gain seats of power, now feel that a dismemberment of the country will suit their ambitions. They have no doubt been encouraged by the British Statesmen as this was advantageous to them too. Mr. Amery and even Sir Stafford Cripps would always deliberately apply the appendage, Sub-Continent, to India. We can only tell them, that if China with a greater number of population, vaster geographical area and with equally varied professions of religious faiths, is not a Sub-Continent, India too is not one. However, the check is provided in the method of elections to the Constitution Making Body. If real representatives of the people working for an unification of the country and welding of the nation are returned in thumping majorities to the provincial legislatures, the clear verdict of the people against any partition of the country will be given. Therefore, it means a stupendous task set for National India, to strive all their best to bring such unifying forces into full accession of strength.

The second proviso about the States role and participation in the Constitution Making Body is too vague and indefinite even though the provinces' role has been clearly defined. Does the 'States' mean only the rulers? Have not the 'ruled' any voice? Are all the state rulers among themselves, on a par in their constitutional achievements? Of late there have been welcome reactions on the minds of the rulers of some of the major states, while many a small ruler

would still wish to be the undisputed monarch. Unless, it is very clearly defined, that it is the states people who should have the primary responsibility in the selection of representatives, the choice of a State Ruler joining or not joining the Union will be arbitrary.

Now, coming to the last proviso, viz., that it is his Majesty's Govts' responsibility to manage the defence of the country, we find, the unadulterated imperialistic language. We know, that the 150 years of British rule in India have left us effeminate and unarmed. We also know that we remain uninitiated in the art of Modern Warfare and direction of military strategy. We realise that British Experts are essential for the development of the country's resources of man power for fighting purposes. But, all the same it can never be agreed for a moment, that we can rest content on the promise made for the future, while now and here, we have every opportunity to assume and discharge the responsibility for defence of the country, with the assistance, no doubt, of the British Experts. No body believes it is practicable for India to immediately take over the military command and management. But the demand is for the major responsibility of defence being allowed to unreservedly devolve into Indian hands. This is the acid test of Britain's sincerity to release her control over this country.

Friends of India among whom Sir Stafford Cripps claims to be and is one, have no doubt swayed the Churchill and Amery combination to deflect and concede India's equality of status unambiguously on the cessation of hostilities. But, Indian political leaders of all shades of opinion do believe that a real transference of power and scope for assumption of responsibility for defence, finance, etc., is the practical and concrete recognition of India's demand for freedom and equality. Sir Stafford Cripps, in the press interview, is reported to have stated that even an unanimous demand for transference of the defence responsibility will not meet with consideration. In that case the efforts of the Friends of India will only remain as good as the 'August Offer'. At least in the August Offer, it was stated that there will be scope for the Indian Members of Viceroy's Cabinet being taken into confidence in matters of defence, to fit them in for the future. But in this declaration there is a going back because, defence is the sole concern of His Majesty's Government in England and their Commander-in-Chief in India. The concession of a seat for India's representative in the war cabinet does not offer any attraction. It is therefore, this clause which obviously has set the brains of our national leaders actively thinking about the genuineness [of] the declared intention of transference of power. It is for Britain to remove this suspicion. It is the duty of the friends of India to get this done if they want their efforts to satisfy the Indian legitimate aspirations, not going unfruitful and thereby deriving the 'bitter pill'? which Sir Stafford Cripps very feelingly referred to in his broadcast appeal.

142. 'That Jigsaw Puzzle Remains Unsolved: Can Sir Cripps Solve It?'
Article by 'Marcopolo' Pointing Out the Mistakes Made by Cripps
and Arguing That the 'Present and the Future Are Completely
Divorced in the Scheme'

Article in *Kaiser-i-Hind* (Bombay) by 'Marcopolo', 5 April 1942.

Unfortunate but True

It would have been better for Sir Cripps to have brought out a scheme only for the duration of the war instead of making such a confusion.

Sir Stafford Cripps Mission in India did not go off on the principle 'I came, I saw, I conquered.' How can one expect it would with such a scheme in pocket as he had in his, that it would be acceptable to all—or even most—parties and sections. He thought he had a magic formula when he came out to India. But it has not satisfied any—even the Muslim League. The scheme is a patchwork of variegated bits—probably it was thought in the War Cabinet that 'everyone will be satisfied.' Each had his own medicine in the mixture—and exactly on that account of 'practicality', each element neutralised all others. The scheme does not look like one from the brain of a wide-awake socialist that Sir Stafford is supposed to be but must have emanated from the brains of his colleagues in the War Cabinet who are living, it appears, in another world than realities. Or did Sir Stafford himself become a 'realist' in the conservative sense i.e., befogged, owing to his position of responsibility in the midst of Tory Colleagues? Otherwise, it is impossible to suppose that he would come to India with such a patchwork knowing that it will be refused here.

Unnecessary Interviews

The mistakes of the scheme and Sir Stafford are many. What was the use of meeting so many people privately—each being kept informed separately what the scheme contained—as if what has to be publicly announced by him and accepted by the persons met should be 'intrigued into' acceptance? This secret diplomacy was very bad. Or is diplomacy all secret, i.e., intrigue? Anyway the truth had to become public property and whatever conversations—'pouparlers'—might have taken place 'under four eyes,' the scheme is rejected in toto from all sides, except perhaps from Mr. Jinnah! He ought to have laid the cards on the table, i.e., in public view, and asked all those who were ready to negotiate on that basis to come forward! That would have saved so many unnecessary 'interviews' and bickering.... Even if the leaders had unanimously accepted the scheme, it would have been severely criticised by the public—as it solves no problem.

It is exactly the so-called practical mind which has evolved such a confusing scheme,—practical here means a mixture of all contradictions inherent in the present. It is exactly this practically which has compelled all parties to reject the scheme as the contradictions do not satisfy anyone. The scheme is supposed to be a transition arrangement between the present and the future. In fact the present and the future are completely divorced in the scheme.

It would have been far better to have brought out a scheme only for the duration of the war instead of making such a confusion.

Overconfidence at Both Ends

Immediate war co-operation is uppermost in the minds of all conflicting sections in this country, but the matter where this has been made impossible is about what arrangement should be made for the governance of the country after the war. That is a thing which no government—not even Indian party leaders—can envisage, for nobody knows, even the masters of British destiny in England cannot claim to know. But the scheme is made as if they know everything about future conditions and arrangements in the world or as if the British Empire is independent of 'world conditions.' It would have been plainer and simpler to have told 'we do not know what the British Empire itself will be like after this war and therefore no constitution can be "schemed" now for India, even by Indians'. But the British cabinet or its 'inner cabinet' seems to be sure that there will be a constitution at least in England and the world will allow the British Empire to continue after victory. That kind of practicality is another name for 'over-confidence'....

Then Come Shiastan and Mominstan

Further, if Muslim provinces are conceded (without ethnic and language considerations!), we might—nay, must—expect Shia-stan, Momin-stan and so on up to Sufi-stan and even in so-called Hindu-provinces there will rise up cry for Dravid-stan, Vaisnava-stan and so on, apart from other racial and linguistic differences. They are all waiting in the offing to claim their rights as soon as others have obtained their rights of secession! Finally everyone will claim his own territory—and subjects! Yet, Sir Stafford's scheme suggests—as condition of accession—Hindu and Muslim provinces even on the present irregular territorial basis! It has no logic in it whether political or other. The scheme certainly provides for internecine strife *ad libitum*! What business has a foreign government which is ready to leave the country to see it divided up before leaving and all in the name of unity and independence? Sir Cripps or his colleagues cannot answer. Sir Cripps says it is not expected that the provinces will seek their own 'independence'! A poor consolation! With sufficient assistance from outside, not necessarily British, they can also be financially bound to foreign interests and make trouble—even wars—in India, supposing as the scheme does that the post-war world will have empires and these empires will be able to serve their interests abroad! This blindness of all statesmen—including our own party leaders and would be statesmen—is all based on foolishness! Created out of the brain-waves come from the past! Such are all self-styled 'practical schemes,' Indian, British or any other—all full of contradictions which cannot be worked in practice, whatever may come as a result on account of their unworkability!

No doubt, there are psychological inhibitions among the Indian leaders which make for disunity, but there are also psychological inhibitions in British statesmen who cannot bring out any workable scheme without contradictions (where theory is not against practice!) even if there was unity to accept it. The chief inhibition is the Empire-mania! 'How can the world live without our empire?'—such seems to be the [illusion of] every British scheme....

The Chief Obstacle

The chief obstacle seems to be about the Defence Membership in the Viceroy's council. All—even Jinnah—seem to want this job for 'Indians.' Sir Stafford Cripps is till now committed to have it reserved for a Briton. But suppose the British Cabinet yields on this point who is the Indian to have that membership? Jinnah will surely want his own nominee or himself while the Savarkarites will want a Dr. Moonje (nicknamed already field-marshal) to clothe that office. Naturally the Congress will be against both but will want another man of its trust to take up that position. Here again there can be no agreement. But the defence ministry itself is of no use in whose-soever hands it may be: First, none will understand its functions and technique and Indians will have to nod to everything said by the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief if they have not to expose their ignorance and want to keep—stick like a leech—to their cushion-chair.

Where Defence Boots Will Pinch

Second the defence problem is a financial problem. The country must pay, pay and pay to keep the defences intact. The defence will be the most unpopular subject on that account—unless Britain is ready to finance or induce America to include India under the Lease-and-Lend scheme. Since that is rarely likely to happen, there can be only one source from which the Defence member can raise funds through the Executive Council—that is by levying contributions from the rich and other haves. The Executive cannot order money to rain from heaven. Can any

Indian run the risk of taking the odium even as defence minister to make the rich or poor pay for war expenses? Whether he is Muslim, Hindu or Congress, his party will be cursed for pumping out money—by both the rich and the poor. Instead of putting enthusiasm for war, they will create discontent and finally hatred. The British Government of India can afford to take the odium because it is foreign. If Britain raises money in India, the payers will console themselves saying they cannot avoid paying—however much they are unwilling to pay. An Indian at the defence-helm will be boycotted within a short time. It is worse than as it is now to place an Indian at the helm of defence—although the vanity of the leaders—if ever leaders do not make row at the man of choice by the Viceroy—may say there must be an Indian—i.e., himself—for the post. It is a childish quarrel which will benefit neither the leaders nor the Viceroy and his Executive Council. If in that council, there are men of various parties, the quarrel will arise about the policy—each saying it must be conducted only according to his or his party ideas, and soon some members are bound to resign! Again a hunt will start for another member! These are not, as claimed, practical problems but making ‘confusion worse confounded.’ If that is politics we might say ‘good luck’ to it!

Sir Stafford Cripps’ scheme instead of striking some line of unity even among the ambitious leaders will have created more ‘high feelings’ in all ranks, exactly on account of the contradictions which it contains—contradictions which act as fuel even when the unity is not achieved. Instead of pouring oil on the troubled waters, it leaves behind a storm which may not subside for a long time.

Sir Stafford Has Missed the Path

Once the Chinese philosophy Meh-Tse (500 B.C.) was asked by a pupil, what should be done to make muddy water clear. Meh-Tse replied: ‘Your question is foolish, for if you do anything, it will remain muddy. If you want to make the water clear, leave it alone—not do anything with it.’ I think this applies not only to Sir Stafford but also to all the political parties in this country and abroad!

143. ‘Friends’ Criticism’: Editorial Commenting on the Criticism of the Scheme Made by T.B. Saprú and M.R. Jayakar

The Bombay Chronicle, 6 April 1942.

The memorandum submitted to Sir Stafford Cripps by Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú and Dr. Jayakar is a reasoned reply to his proposals. These leaders can in no sense be dismissed as extremists. They are among the tried friends of Britain and even now wish well of her, though they are painfully alive the many sins of commission and omission in India. They give their friendliest warning to Britain that now at least her blunders must cease and, if possible, be retrieved. They wisely concentrate their attention on two serious blunders, namely, the non-transference of real power to the people during the war and the disruptive features of the proposed Constituent Assembly. The first topic is naturally most in the minds of the people now when the war is on the door-step. Almost every other question is now related directly or indirectly to the civil and military defence of the country. When in such a condition Sir Stafford says that ‘handing over political control and direction of defence in the midst of the war to the Indian Government would be fatal’, he practically refuses to transfer any real power to the people. Against such

an attitude Sir Tej Bahadur and Dr. Jayakar emphatically protest in common with all right-thinking people.

Transfer of Defence Essential

The arguments generally advanced against the transfer of Defence to Indian control are utterly untenable. With regard to the plea urged by Sir Stafford that the defence of India is a part of Britain's world war effort, Sir Tej Bahadur and Dr. Jayakar clinch the point in the following words: 'While we appreciate the necessity of unity of policy and control in matters of defence, we think, in common with most of our countrymen, that the appointment of an Indian Member in charge of Defence, working in close association and co-operation with the War Cabinet and willing to accept expert advice, will be taken, at this stage, as an unmistakable token of the reality of the transfer of such power and as a symbol of the confidence of His Majesty's Government in the people of this country'. If the Dominions can get on with Britain in the common task of conducting the war, while having their own Defence Ministers, there is no reason why India cannot do likewise with equal powers. The Indian Defence Minister and the War Cabinet will have their distinct spheres in which each will be free but the two spheres can certainly be coordinated. Elaborating this point in his reply to the American press, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari pertinently observes: 'No one desires to run counter to or sabotage the larger policies and strategies of the British Cabinet. India will be content in that respect with advising at the War Cabinet. But within India the new Government to be set up at once should be related to defence measures and policies at least as Mr. Curtin is related to the same in Australia. I say at least, because I want more. Without more, the people in India who are not related cannot be roused to battle-fervour unless there is something more than an apology and explanation.' In the interest of a common cause Rajaji does well to remind America that the present official Government of India is competent and experienced in the art of defending India against her own people, but not in defending India against Japan.

Apple of Discord

Though Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. Jayakar lay special emphasis on the question of immediate changes in Government, they do not ignore the dangers in the proposals almost encouraging provinces to keep out of the Indian Union. 'While we recognise', they say, 'the justice of allowing any Province of British India the liberty of remaining out of the new constitution and of retaining its present constitutional position, we are not free from considerable doubt and anxiety about the wisdom of the further provision, which makes it possible for another Federal Union being established'. They particularly fear that such a Federal Union 'may in certain conceivable circumstances be a rival or hostile union.' The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri is more uncompromising and more severe in his condemnation of the proposals in question. In his address to the Progressive Group of Bombay on Friday he said that the Cripps scheme 'in this respect was not merely an advice but an encouragement and incitement to those provinces and States to stay out of the constitution in that they were promised the same status as that of the Indian federation'. Ordinarily, Mr. Sastri does not indulge in attributing of motives. But in the present case he felt constrained to remark that one of the reasons that might have impelled the British Conservatives and the retired Civil Service men to support the scheme might be that an India composed of Independent entities would not be as powerful and strong as a single united India commanding respect and influence in the world. Even in law a man is

presumed to intend the natural consequences of his acts. Mr. Sastri speaks more with sorrow than bitterness when he says: 'I regret I have lived to see a day, when an Englishman with his own hand seems willing to destroy this great work of unity, a work which will be handed down to posterity'. Those that have more bitterness in their hearts—who can say there is no ground for it?—may observe that the proposals are not the first apple of discord thrown amongst Indians nor may be the last. Yet we continue to quarrel over the apple!

144. 'Mr. Jinnah's Demands': Editorial Commenting on How the Proposals Favoured the Muslim League and on the Unreasonableness of M.A. Jinnah's Demand of Wanting Pakistan without Plebiscite

Jam-e-Jamshed (Bombay), 7 April 1942.

The draft declaration brought by Sir Stafford Cripps definitely proceeds on the principles that if any province decides not to accede to the proposed new Indian constitution it would have the right to remain aloof from the Federal Union. Mr. Jinnah had been insisting on Pakistan being conceded. The Cripps scheme has been designed with the object of giving the Muslims an opportunity to prove their case. It lays down that where the provincial legislature decides to accede by a majority of 60 percent that would be the final decision in favour of accession so far as that province was concerned. If a majority less than 60 percent was recorded the minority would have the right to demand a plebiscite. The issue so far as the plebiscite is concerned would be decided by a simple majority. It is significant that the plebiscite would be confined only to male voters, the female voters being denied the right of voting on account of the fact that Muslim women live in 'parda' and may not go to the polls in sufficient numbers. Thus the Cripps proposals favour Muslims in two ways; first, by laying down that a bare majority only was required for deciding the issue referred to the plebiscite, and secondly, by excluding women from the plebiscite.

As it is well-known there are four provinces which are bones of contention so far as the Cripps proposals are concerned. They are Sind, N. W. F. P., the Punjab and Bengal. With regard to the first two, it is clear that the Hindus' proportion is so small that a straight 60 percent vote in favour of non-accession may be recorded by their legislative assemblies. With regard to Bengal the position is that out of the 250 seats in the lower house 25 are held by Europeans while 124 are commanded by the Muslims. The population of Muslims in Bengal according to the 1941 census is 54 percent while 46 percent are Hindus. It is obvious that in Bengal the Hindus cannot have a 60 percent majority vote in favour of accession. The issue would be decided by a simple majority by plebiscite. Bengal could thus remain aloof from the proposed new Indian Union. With regard to the Punjab the problem there is also complicated by 31 seats given to the Sikhs in a house of 175. In this province also there would not be the requisite majority to decide accession issue straightaway and a plebiscite would be necessary. It is conceivable that Muslims may secure the bare majority necessary for determining the issue. But it is also possible that both in Bengal and in the Punjab even a bare majority may not be available in which case these two provinces may have to remain within the Indian Federation. The remaining two provinces Sind and N.W.F.P. are so helpless in the matter of finance that by themselves they cannot form a separate Federal Union and shoulder the responsibility and expense of a central Government.

Realising this position Mr. Jinnah at the session of the League at Allahabad stated that the Muslims were deeply disappointed at the Cripps proposals. He observed that 'any attempt to solve the problem of India by the process of evading the real issue and over-emphasising the totalitarian entity of the province which are mere accidents of the British policy and administrative divisions, is definitely wrong. Muslim India will not be satisfied unless their right of national self-determination is unequivocally recognised. We cannot barter away the future for the present while fully realising the danger of foreign aggression and notwithstanding all our anxiety to defend Indian and to help the prosecution of the war.'

In short what Mr. Jinnah demands is that Pakistan should be conceded to him even without a plebiscite. This is an unreasonable demand because in the case of Bengal it means that a substantial number of Hindus, namely, 46 percent and numbering some 23,000,000 would have to be straightaway handed over to the Muslims. Though the Cripps proposals are not acceptable to those who lay stress on preserving the political integrity of India, Mr. Jinnah's demand goes considerably further. He would have Pakistan at all costs and would decline the right of self-determination to the millions of Hindus. It is rather unfortunate that Mr. Jinnah is not satisfied with Sir Stafford's proposals which already favour the Muslim community in more ways than one. Mr. Jinnah's attitude is hardly helpful to the country and it is high time that masses of Muslims enquired where this stiff attitude would take them.

145. 'Growing Opposition': Editorial on How the Scheme Was Viewed Very Differently by All the Political Parties, Yet Rejected by All of Them

The Bombay Chronicle, 7 April 1942.

The Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the States' People's Conference approach the Cripps scheme from different points of view but they all reject it as it is. The different modifications they insist upon are not all definitely known as they are still under confidential negotiations. Nor is it possible to make any definite forecast about the final result. All that can be gathered from the interview between the Congress President and General Wavell is that if an understanding is reached regarding Defence, other disputed points, if any, will be more easily settled. One can, however, gather from the well-known demands of the Congress the limits of any compromise that may emerge from the present negotiations. The League's resolution on the Cripps scheme does not say anything about the scheme itself but only authorises the President 'till the next session to take every step or action as he may consider necessary in furtherance of and relating to, the objects of the Muslim League as he deems proper, provided they are consistent with the principles, policy and goal of the League or any resolution expressly passed by the sessions of the All-India Muslim League.' The President's views may be fairly gathered from his speech at the League [session]. He is not satisfied with the right to secede the British War Cabinet has conceded to provinces. He wants Pakistan on a communal basis embodying 'the entity and integrity of the Muslim nation.' And his complaint against the Cripps scheme is that 'Pakistan is treated in the British declaration as a remote possibility with a definite preference for an Indian Union, which is the main objective.'

Worthy of Commiseration

On the other hand, the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha has declared its 'irrevocable determination to resist the British Government's scheme at all costs and by all possible means' because it tends towards 'the vivisection of India.' The Committee states further that 'if any party in India directly or indirectly encourages or acquiesces in implementing the scheme, it will be regarded as enemy of the country by all those who stand for the unity and integrity of Hindustan.' We doubt if Sir Stafford Cripps reckoned with such reception to his proposals. Perhaps he will agree with Mr. Srinivasa Sastry that 'the greatest commiseration in this world must be given to a Government which brings two communities to assume such a defiant attitude towards each other that it cannot intervene and that the communities must fall out.' The communities concerned also deserve commiseration both for their growing defiance and for their lack of power to come to an understanding.

Possibilities of a Settlement

The Standing Committee of the All-India States' People's Conference has also rejected the Cripps scheme. The Committee stated 'inter alia': 'the whole scheme is a complete negation of the avowed war aims of the British Government and would appear to be an attempt to consolidate the British Colonial domination in large parts of India and to maintain autocratic rule in the States.' The Committee also declares that 'nothing short of full self-determination and the right to frame the constitution of the States as well as to participate in the Constituent Assembly for all India through their elected representatives can be accepted or can meet the requirements of the situation.' Meanwhile, the Committee wisely calls upon the people of the States 'to strengthen their respective organisations in order to bring pressure upon their Rulers for the fulfilment of their demands and to be prepared for all the eventualities that will necessarily arise in the course of such awakening.' With regard to the country as a whole the next few hours may decide whether the negotiations that have gone on for several days past and in a satisfactory settlement. We believe that if the British Government display a genuine spirit of compromise on the vital issue of Defence, a settlement is still possible on the basis of Congress proposals. Boiled down, these proposals are a National Government for the duration of the war so as to rouse the people to 'battle fervour', as Mr. C. Rajagopalachari puts it, and a Constituent Assembly after the war to devise a constitution for India, subject to the rights of recognised minorities to formulate their own safeguards, disputed points being referable to arbitration. We believe that only on the basis of some such proposals is a lasting settlement possible, through any settlement will, of course, be welcome, even it should be of a tentative character.

146. 'A National Government?': Editorial Expressing Optimism That a Settlement Might Be Reached Leading to the Formation of a National Government

The Bombay Chronicle, 10 April 1942.

The latest reports from Delhi about constitutional talks seem too good to be true, but we must beware of hallooing till we are out of the wood. Reports from different sources agree that 'a general understanding on the main points of discussion is nearly reached' and that 'so far as the Congress is concerned there will be no difficulty or delay in the establishment of a National

Government in India.' Our own Correspondent is more definite and says that a Defence formula has been generally accepted which 'provides for clear division of functions—General Wavell to be Supreme Commander for the conduct of the war under the War Cabinet, while the Indian Defence Minister, acting under the authority of the National Government, will be in charge of Defence policy and organisation, so far as Indian forces are concerned.' If the facts are as stated, both the Congress and Sir Stafford Cripps deserve to be congratulated, as also outside friends like Col. Johnson who are reported to have striven hard to bring the two together. But the 'if' must be reckoned with.

Adjustment

Assuming that an honourable settlement has been arrived at with regard to Defence, it may be more safely assumed that other subjects have been more completely transferred to Indian control. But what about those proposals of Sir Stafford which deal with self-determination after the war and permit the partition of India? It is impossible to expect that the Congress has accepted them without radical changes, though it has wisely put most emphasis on the immediate changes. It is equally impossible to expect that Sir Stafford and the War Cabinet have been less accommodating about the procedure of self-determination after the uncompromising opposition to the objectionable features therein from a number of political bodies including the Congress. One may presume that Sir Stafford has accepted important changes in this matter. And, after all, it is open to the expected National Government to formulate an agreed or at least a more acceptable procedure for self-determination.

Wanted Transfer of Power

What may be the reaction of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha and other smaller bodies to the reported understanding between Congress and Sir Stafford? The Mahasabha has already agreed to join the proposed National Government even though its objection to the clause in the draft proposal giving freedom to the provinces not to join the Indian Union still remains. The League is not satisfied with the partial concession to the Pakistan principle and demands its fuller recognition. But it may, like the Mahasabha, agree to join the National Government provided a due number of seats are offered to it, of course, without prejudice to its views on Pakistan. As the Congress has always fought for the transfer of power to the people and not for itself, there will not be any serious difficulty in the distribution of seats in the National Government. Let us hope that a real National Government is installed at once. This vital reform brooks no further delay.

147. 'Avoidable Hitch': Editorial Commenting on the New Obstacles in the Negotiations Relating to the Demarcation of Responsibilities between the Indian Defence Minister and the Commander-in-Chief
The Bombay Chronicle, 11 April 1942.

The negotiation about the Cripps scheme seem to be taking sharp turns from day to day and the latest reports show that a deadlock has been reached. The reports of a satisfactory settlement that were widely current on Thursday were proved premature the following day. It appears that differences have re-emerged over the question of Defence and that the detailed explanations now given of the changes in the original Cripps proposals are considered by Congress leaders

as unsatisfactory. As a Congress leader is said to have put it, the second reading stage of the Bill has revealed unsuspected difficulties. Whether these difficulties will be got over is again a matter of speculation. It is definitely known that the Working Committee's decisions are unanimous and have been communicated to Sir Stafford Cripps. The report that the Congress President is leaving Delhi to-day for Allahabad 'en route' to Calcutta has a touch of finality about it which is not pleasant to contemplate. More light may be thrown on the situation by Sir Stafford at the Press Conference he is convening to-day and by the Congress resolution and the supplementary statement which also the President hopes to be able to publish to-day.

Distrust of People

According to the Associated Press, the real hitch is mainly owing to differences on the transfer of defence to Indian control on the Congress demand for a virtual end of the Secretary of State's control and on the demand that where a majority of the future cabinet were agreed the Viceroy should not use his power of veto,—which, in short, means that the Cripps proposals, even as modified, do not satisfy the Indian demand for a genuine National Government. At the outset Sir Stafford refused point blank to give an Indian Minister any control over Defence. But it appears that in the light of almost unanimous demand for such control he accepted the principle of the demand and obtained even the War Cabinet's consent to partial transfer to control. The eleventh hour hitch is in all probability with regard to the exact demarcation of the sphere of the Indian Minister and the British Commander-in-Chief. According to the Associated Press, the Working Committee of the Congress feel that during the detailed discussions of the new Defence formula it became clear that powers and functions intended to be transferred were unsatisfactory. There is no trouble about such demarcation in Britain or even in Australia. But in India Britain still distrusts the people and is striving to concede as little as possible to the Indian Minister and to reserve as much as possible for the British representative. The question is no longer whether Defence is to be transferred or reserved. It is rather how much is to be transferred. The problem is doubtless much narrowed down. But the unsolved part is of vital importance to India.

Not Too Late Yet

The problem cannot be satisfactorily solved by Britain and America trying to hustle India into accepting a nominal control over Defence on the plea that the enemy has almost entered the gate. It is precisely because the enemy has entered the gate that every Indian has got to be stirred to battle fervor. And this is possible only if he feels that India is free and is being defended by her own Ministers. It is also objected that diarchy is most dangerous in the conduct of the war. But what India demands is not diarchy but an extension of the principle of division of labour to the department of Defence. She demands the applications to India of the policy that is followed in free democratic countries, where in the last analysis the Defence and other departments carry out its instructions. If this policy is followed here before it is too late, it will be an advantage to Britain as well as India. According to reports it is not merely on the ground of Defence that a settlement has not been reached. Differences have emerged on this and also other matters on which it was previously thought that an understanding was in sight. It may be that even Sir Stafford Cripps himself has been overruled by the British Cabinet. We trust, however, that it is even now not too late for wiser counsels to prevail with the latter. The Congress though unable to accept the War Cabinet's proposals, is prepared to take office

if the Government at the Centre is a truly National Government with Cabinet responsibility and not merely an extension of the Governor-General's Council. The Congress stand is the only one it can take up consistently, with the country's honour and its urgent need in the hour of its greatest danger and, above all, in the interest of victory in the War.

148. 'India Assured of Dominion Status': Editorial Looking upon the Scheme as 'Sincere' and Hoping That Indian Leaders Would Consider It Seriously

The Goa Mail (Bombay), 11 April 1942.

Sir Stafford Cripps has made public the proposals with which he has been entrusted by the British War Cabinet for the solution of the Indian problem and which he has been discussing with leaders of various political parties, representing divergent views and interests. The proposals envisage a full self-government to India 'with a constitution as free in every respect as our own in Great Britain or as of any of the great Dominion members of the British Commonwealth of Nations,'—in other words, 'India would be associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown but equal to them, in every respect in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or its external affairs.' And India has the right to secede if she wishes to do so. The offer to India is a definite one, and a generous one at that, and it is now for the people and princes of India to decide whether they should accept or decline it. There is of course the proviso regarding non-acceding provinces, and, because of it the British government is being accused of encouraging separatism. What the British government has done is merely to include in the proposals a tentative proviso to cover claims advanced by Indians themselves. If as suggested by Sir Stafford Cripps, the people and princes of India, irrespective of their religion and races, would come together in a constitution-making to frame their own constitution, there need be no separatism at all. And Sir Stafford Cripps must have had in view the behavior of the Catalonians in Spain and of the Croats and Serbs in Yugoslavia when, in referring to the proviso in his broadcast appeal, he said: 'If you want to persuade a number of people who are inclined to be antagonistic to enter the same room, it is unwise to tell them that once they go in there is no way out—they are to be forever locked in together. It is much wiser to tell them that they can go in and if they find they cannot come to a common decision then there is nothing to prevent those who wish from leaving again by another door. They are much more likely all to go in if they have the knowledge that they can by their free will, go out again if they cannot agree.

That is what we say to the provinces of India. Come together to frame a common constitution. If you find after all your discussion and all the give and take of a constitution-making assembly that you cannot overcome your difference and that some provinces are still not satisfied with the constitution, then such provinces can go out and remain out if they wish and just the same degree of self-government and freedom will be available for them as for the Union itself—that is to say complete self-government.' The argument is as true as it is sincere and, therefore, deserving of all consideration from the leaders and people of India.



149. 'Cripps' Magic Hat': Editorial Criticizing the Proposals for Offering Independence at the Cost of Indian Unity

Social Welfare (Bombay), 12 April 1942.

The Cripps scheme envisages the following:

- (a) Indians should willingly place themselves unreservedly in British hands during the War;
- (b) If and when Britain wins the War, India will be recognised as independent [and] Provinces and states with liberty to federate if they so choose, or like Ulster, to have direct relations with Britain. This means that India was a unit to suit British purposes; that it should remain such for the purposes of the War; but that no sooner it has helped to win victory it will be deemed not to be a nation or even a country but a bundle of principalities.

India was conceived one and indivisible. The British prided themselves on giving it political unity. The nationalist swore by the Nation. Most Indians swore by its integrity. But the contingent benefit of being a Dominion after the War, according to the Cripps plan, is so great that we should agree to abandon India's integrity. We wanted the integrity of and freedom for India. In the pre-Crippsian days we were told that in the interests of integrity we can't get freedom. Now we are told that in the interests of our contingent freedom we can't have our integrity.

I have wished well to the embassy of Sir Stafford. I hoped and still hope to see it succeed.

I do not think that this part of the scheme is devised with some ulterior motive. I have no reason to revise my opinion expressed through these columns that this offer is bonafide, Sir Stafford Cripps is above being a party to such a thing. But Indian problems have always baffled foreigners.

The British statesman wanted a scheme which would satisfy the claims of everyone—a sort of magic hat which can produce a fowl or a banana just as the audience wanted.

To bring in the disruptionists, the scheme provided the possibility of Pakistan, of seceding provinces and of more than one Union. Ironically the British gave up their only excuse for remaining in India. They have all along said that the supreme need of India was the cementing influence of a strong Central Government which could provide adequate defence. Now that they look forward to relaxing their hold, the need no longer exists; on the contrary, it is a positive nuisance.

The scheme creates an unnatural psychological basis. The present-day Indian Provinces are administrative accidents. Some of them have comparatively less organic unity than the organic unity which India as a whole possesses. Some provinces—Madras, for instance—have linguistic provinces clamouring for separation. Suddenly to invest such provinces with the sovereign right of federating or seceding at their will is a feat of constitution-mongering so arbitrary, so unreal, that one is surprised that Sir Stafford should have lent his name to it.

The Hindu-Muslim problem is least likely to be solved by it. For two or three long years there will be a struggle for influencing votes on the issues: Should we federate or secede? Should we have one Union or many? Should we have direct relations with Britain or through Delhi? Should the minorities in the provinces [be] likely to secede, fight or migrate?

After the War, general elections on these issues will be a civil war on an all-India scale. The Indian Princes who will form part of the Constituent Assembly will despite their impatience of the Paramount power, fight against the country's integrity unless for a price which would

make the integrity not worth having. There will be a race for direct relations with Britain. Religious frenzy may also be duly marshalled.

The Constituent Assembly will then be a veritable farce. The seceding Provinces and the non-federating States will help to decide upon a federal constitution which they will be free to run away from. Throughout, the burden will be thrown on the Nationalist to go on making concessions without knowing whether those who demand them are going to come in. To the Province which stands out, the British hand of friendship will always be extended. And hemmed in by a multitude of Ulsters such provinces as choose to federate will set up a Dominion Government of a truncated India.

The scheme is illogical in the extreme. First, there is no reason why those provinces which keep to themselves the right to secede should help to forge the constitution of the Union.

Secondly, there is no reason why the nominees of autocratic States should be called in help to bring into existence a democratic constitution.

Thirdly, there is no validity in vesting provinces of British India with quasi-sovereign powers which they have never enjoyed.

Fourthly, there is no warrant either in precedent or justice, why, if Muslims cannot remain under a Hindu majority in India, a Hindu or a Sikh minority should be coerced to go under a Muslim majority rule in the provinces.

The fact of the matter is plain.

When India was under qualified British rule Indian unity was preserved. When some power was transferred to Indian hands in the Provinces, the unitary government was converted into federal. When further power is promised to be transferred, it is on the condition of breaking up Indian unity.

We want both integrity and freedom. If the choice has to be made,—I hope the Nation won't be put to it—the way before it is clear. It should choose integrity to freedom, waiting for a better chance of attaining both. For, without integrity for India there is no freedom.

I hope Sir Stafford Cripps and other Britishers will realize the dangers which they propose to set up in the name of Democracy. If they want India to be a free and equal partner of the Commonwealth let them not begin by sapping its foundations.

150. Editorial in *Samyukta Karnatak* Holding the British War Cabinet Responsible for the Breakdown of the Negotiations and Commenting That Cripps 'Walked into the Net of Imperialists', 12 April 1942

F. No. 1018-G.I., Home Department (Special), Maharashtra State Archives (MSA).

We are extremely sorry to note that Sir Stafford Cripps' mission has failed. It is gathered that the negotiations broke down owing to the difference of opinion between Sir Stafford and the Congress Working Committee on the question of setting up a National Government at the centre. Though the British Government agreed to call the new Indian Government a National Government the scheme as envisaged by the Government was completely anti-national. According to Sir Stafford's revised proposals the British Government agreed to appoint an Indian Defence minister with restricted powers. And it was so arranged that he should be responsible to the Viceroy and not to the people. How is it possible for the Congress to accept such proposals? Sir Stafford has stated in the tone of the old British Statesmen that fundamental

changes in the Indian constitution cannot be effected just now in a hurried manner and that it is not possible to ignore the pledges given to the minorities. We are not surprised by this refusal. The British Cabinet is responsible for this breakdown. We are sorry that Sir Stafford has walked into the net of the imperialists. We are sorry to send Sir Stafford back empty-handed. We are extremely surprised to note that Sir Stafford still holds the view that the British Cabinet's proposals were just and final.

151. 'Rejected': Editorial Considering the Failure of the Mission to Be Inevitable as the Proposals Were Inadequate and Offered No Real Power and Responsibility to the Indians during the War

The Bombay Chronicle, 13 April 1942.

The failure of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps will naturally cause profound disappointment all over India and among the Allies in general. But the rejection of his final proposals by all the important parties in the country was inevitable. So far as the present is concerned, they conferred no real power and responsibility on the people, too much being left to the discretion of the Viceroy. And in respect of Defence, which is the most vital department in the present crisis, the powers given to India were too inadequate to enable her to shoulder her terrible responsibility. As regards the proposals for the future too there were fundamental objections to them. But final decisions thereon could well have been postponed if there were a settlement on the more urgent problem of immediate changes. As Sir Stafford has refused to concede almost the unanimous demands of the people, his whole scheme has been rejected by all the principal parties.

Congress Readiness for Compromise

When the Cripps scheme was published a fortnight ago, it was found utterly unacceptable in its draft form. But the talks with Sir Stafford gave one the impression that substantial changes therein would be possible. To facilitate a settlement the Congress went far to minimise the differences. The proposals for the future had many objectionable features calculated to destroy the unity and integrity of the country, to spread in it a net-work of Ulsters. The leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and various other bodies like the Liberal Federation and the Non-Party Conference strongly condemned these features and many declared their determination to resist them at all cost. In the face of much misrepresentation the Congress, while uncompromisingly opposing the disruptive tendencies in question, expressed its readiness to postpone the consideration of the whole problem of the future, in the consciousness that if a National Government could be formed immediately, it would be able to devise and implement a more acceptable procedure for a Constituent Assembly. Touching on this point in his letter to Sir Stafford, the Congress President said: 'The over-riding problem before all of us, and more especially before all Indians, is the Defence of the country from aggression and invasion, the future, important as it is, will depend on what happens in the next few months and years. We were, therefore, prepared to do without any assurances for this uncertain future, hoping that through our sacrifices in the defence of our country, we would lay the solid and enduring foundations for a free and independent India. We concentrated, therefore, on the present'. Opinions may well vary on the merits of a decision to forego all guarantees about the future while participating in the horrors

of war. But the decision demonstrates the extreme anxiety of Congress to reach a settlement. It concentrated its attention on the question of immediate changes.

Progressive Deterioration

The generally accepted aim in these changes is to rouse the people to battle fervor and to induce them to make all kinds of sacrifices. Common knowledge of human nature and recent history should convince one that people can court such sacrifices only for a great cause like freedom and democracy, when they know they are free and can retain their freedom by fighting for all they are worth. It is this knowledge that made all parties in India demand the immediate transfer of real power to Indians in all departments, particularly in Defence. But as the last resolution of the Congress Working Committee observes: 'The British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and it would appear that no vital changes in the present structure are contemplated. It has been made clear that the defence of India will in any event remain under British control.' As regards changes in general Sir Stafford said in his letter of April 7 to the Congress President: 'It is impossible to make any [change] in the existing Constitution during the period of hostilities.' To this the President rightly replied: 'Every thing that helps in the war not only can be but must be done, and done with speed. That is the only way to carry on to win a war. No complicated enactments are necessary. A recognition of India's freedom and right to self-determination could easily be made, if it was so wished together with certain other consequential but important changes. The rest can be left to future arrangements and adjustments. I might remind you that the British Prime Minister actually proposed a union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France. No greater or more fundamental changes could be imagined, and this was suggested at a period of grave crisis and peril. War accelerates change. It does not fit in with static conceptions.' Moreover, much could be done through a Gentlemen's Agreement and convention. It appears from the following lines in the President's last letter to Sir Stafford that at an early stage of the negotiation the Congress demand was accepted in substance: 'What we were told in our very first talk with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be National Government which would function as a cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-à-vis* his cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions' Office. The whole of this picture which you sketched before us has now been completely shattered by what you told us during our last interview.' As regards Defence in particular after protracted negotiations comparatively less important subjects were decided to be transferred and the important and decisive ones to be reserved. And this, in spite of the assurances given by the Working Committee that it had no desire to upset, in the middle of the war, the present military organization or arrangements and that the Commander-in-Chief would control the armed forces and would have full latitude in the carrying out of operations connected with the war. And the President could not accept a formula which was only a new set of words meaning the same thing. The Working Committee, rightly remarks: 'At any time defence is a vital subject: during war time it is all-important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration. To take away defence from the sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her Government is not going to function as a free and independent Government during the pendency of the war.'

There Must Be Settlement

In fact, Maulana Azad makes a definite charge against the British Government that there has been a definite deterioration in their attitude as the negotiations proceeded. This charge clearly proves that Sir Stafford Cripps was not a free agent in carrying on negotiations and that, at every stage, the obscurantist influences of New Delhi and Whitehall prevented a settlement. And the settlement having been effectively prevented, even Sir Stafford Cripps succumbed to the temptation of conjuring up the familiar bureaucratic bogey of 'absolute dictatorship of the majority' in spite of the fact that the Congress had made it clear that it was not interested in itself gaining power but was interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power and that it was prepared, once the willingness of the British Government to transfer power was unequivocally expressed, to discuss how the Cabinet should be formed and should function. The Congress President could, in the circumstances only say: 'We are convinced that if the British Government did not pursue a policy of encouraging disruption all of us to whatever party or group we belonged, would be able to come together and find a common line of action. But, unhappily even in this grave hour of peril the British Government is unable to give up its wrecking policy. We are driven to the conclusion that it attaches more importance to holding on to its rule in India as long as it can and promoting discord and disruption here with that end in the view, than to an effective defence of India against the aggression and invasion that overhang us. To us, and to all Indians, the dominant consideration is the defence and safety of India and it is by that test that we judge.' No wonder even an Anglo-Indian paper like the *Statesmen* is moved to deplore the failure of the negotiations in the following words: 'So long as the India Office and the Government of India draft the proposals no emissary can succeed and no effective effort will be made to cope with the hourly increasing danger to this country. A clean sweep of personalities is needed. It is no use trying to carry on with the men who have wielded authority in the past. They did well according to their lights. But their lights are dim. Sir Stafford Cripps has been made a dupe, but the scheme will overreach itself.' But, facing the greatest trial in their history, the Indian people have no bitterness in their hearts. Their immediate purpose is to secure the defence and safety of India. There can be no question of embarrassing the Government in their war effort. It would be like cutting one's nose to spite one's face. The people of India are in earnest in their determination to resist the aggressor in all ways open to them. The British Government, if they are wise and if they are to serve the cause of victory truly and well must at once revive their attitude towards the united Indian demand and lose no time in coming to a settlement. We have no doubt public opinion in England and Allied countries as well as the clamant demand of war needs will soon compel them to adopt such a course. India can mould the policy of the British Government to her will by the pressure of her own united determination. We wish during the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps the Congress and the League had come together and presented a united demand for wartime arrangements. That opportunity was unfortunately not seized. But it is still there. The menace of war almost within our gates, if nothing else, should lead to the mobilization of the forces of Congress and the League. Such mobilization is the call of patriotism and statesmanship and it will be irresistible.



152. 'Cripps Mission Fails': Editorial Expressing Disappointment at the Breakdown and Showing Apprehension That It Might Undermine the Will of Indian People to Resist the Japanese Invasion

Jam-e-Jamshed, 13 April 1942.

It is little short of national tragedy that the Cripps mission which at one time bore promise of success has failed and the British Government have withdrawn their offer to India. The psychological reaction resulting from the disappointment at the failure are bound to be prejudicial to good defence of India. What is most disappointing is that the settlement could not be reached on points as to which there was some hope of settlement. At one time it was felt that the Congress would be most opposed to partitioning of India and that the question of defence would sink into comparative insignificance. It appears that at the eleventh hour another issue cropped up, namely, the nationalisation of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

With regard to the defence, the Congress point of view was that since Defence would predominate in the present circumstances and overshadow the work of every other department, refusal to concede responsibility in Defence would be a mere farce and that the hopes of India having a free and independent Government during the pendency of the war would be frustrated. The Congress feels that 'even at this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanise the people of India to rise to the heights of the occasion. But it is manifest that the present Government of India and its provincial agencies are lacking in competence and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defence. It is only the people of India through their popular representatives who may shoulder this burden worthily but that can only be done by present freedom and full responsibility being passed on to them.' The point of view of the British Government is that the Indian Defence Member or his equivalent could not be given greater responsibility than what was proposed to be given, such as beyond administration of defence personnel, without jeopardising immediate defence of India. It was not enough to confine to the Commander-in-Chief complete control of the armed forces and matters connected therewith. Besides higher strategy, conduct of operations and disposition of forces, the British Government felt that the Commander-in-Chief should have complete control over all such subjects a great many of which normally fell within the purview of a defence member. In short, no agreement could be reached on the subjects and functions which should be within the province of the Commander-in-Chief and those which would be the responsibility of the Indian Defence Member. Perhaps in the stress of war a meticulous division of functions between the Commander-in-Chief and the Indian Defence Member was not practicable. Whatever may be the inherent difficulty the breakdown of the negotiations is to be regretted since it will leave the political situation much worse than when the negotiations began.

With regard to the nationalisation of the Viceroy's Council the British Government's view has been that the Congress proposals are tantamount to giving major political organisations absolute dictatorship. The minorities would be left to the mercy of a permanent and irremovable Executive, which would not be consistent with the pledges given by the British Government to the minorities. It should be noted, however, that the demand for nationalisation of the Governor-General's Council came from all parties. It was desirable that except in matter of defence in all other departments the Governor-General should normally have followed the views of his Council. To give the Governor-General power to override his Council every now and then would be tantamount to reducing the members of the Council to dignified departmental heads. In such cases the members could have no power to initiate policy or to effect radical

changes in the administration of their departments. The spirit of the 'steel frame' has not yet left the British Government. At least on this issue the British Government should have yielded. Except where defence touched vitally, in all the departments the view of the Council should have been allowed to prevail. There is no reason to believe that the members of the Viceroy's Council would be unreasonable men or that they would take any line of action calculated to prejudice India's defence.

It is no use hiding the fact that the shadow of disappointment at the failure of the Cripps' mission will descend over India and undermine the will to resist the enemy. Unfortunately there are elements in this country who rejoice at this failure but they will find themselves disillusioned if they believe that Japan will let India go unscathed because there is no solution of her political problem.

153. Extracts from *Nav Karnatak* (Bijapur), *Vishal Karnatak* (Dharwar), and *Samyukta Karnatak* (Hubli) Commenting on the Issues Involved in the Proposals and the Reasons for the Breakdown, 14 April 1942

F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

The *Nav Karnatak* writes:- As the leaders of the various political parties in India have expressed the opinion that the Cripps' Proposals, which do not confer the right of Defence, are unacceptable, the British Government is again considering over the matter. Though Indians may not be able to fight against foreign nations in defence of their country, they are certainly able to maintain internal peace in the country. It is true that the problem of war is intricate. But Indians have the strength to render help in the war-effort. It is proper and essential to transfer the Defence portfolio to Indian hands in order to increase the output of war materials and to prepare the country for its defence. The second objection of the Indian leaders is in regard to the clause which gives the provinces the right of remaining outside the Indian Union if they so desire. But if the British Government settles the Defence question properly, this objection may be settled by the Indians themselves. Both the British and Indians, with a spirit of mutual accommodation should work with confidence, patience and boldness. Let us hope that success will attend these proposals and that India will be free.

Writing in the same strain the *Vishal Karnatak* observes:- Though the opinions of different parties on Cripps' Proposals differ, each party demands the transfer of Defence to Indian hands. Does the Government remember its words when it said that it will confer independence if it was unanimously demanded? Then is it not expedient for the British Government to transfer the Defence portfolio, which is being demanded by all the parties, to Indian hands? This will facilitate greater help being given to the war effort and people will be ready to sacrifice their all for the successful prosecution of this war. This is really good from the point of view of the British Government. We wish to state clearly that it should not adopt a distrustful attitude towards India. Thus if India's demands are fulfilled, India and England are bound to fight this war shoulder to shoulder and victory is certain.

The *Samyukta Karnatak* notes:- The real purpose of the right of self-determination is to see that stronger nations do not overpower the weaker ones. But this is now being made use of for the breaking up of India. Sir Stafford has given it a place in his Proposals. The right of self-determination is not intended for the different component parts of a nation but for the nation as a whole. India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, is one nation. The breaking

up of it is similar to the cutting of a hand or a leg from the body. It is one nation also from the cultural and economic points of view. We are regretfully surprised to note that under such circumstances the British statesmen have come forward to confer on the provinces the right of remaining aloof from the Indian Union and that the Americans also give support to such proposals. Are the British prepared to give such type of freedom to Scotland and Wales? We are sorry to note this destructive policy of the statesmen of a crumbling Empire.

154. Editorial Defending the Decision of the CWC and Looking upon Sir Stafford Cripps's Reasons as 'Lame Excuses'

Samyukta Karnatak (Hubli Distt., Dharwar), 14 April 1942.

The Congress Working Committee has given strong reasons for its inability to accept Sir Stafford Cripps' Proposals. The Working Committee's statement that these proposals were made to Indians only because of the present situations is quite proper. It was clear even to the man in the street that India looked on the Cripps' Proposals with suspicion. Sir Stafford's proposals in regard to the rights of the subjects of Indian states were thoroughly unsatisfactory. They also gave scope to the disintegration of India by giving the provinces the choice of remaining outside the Indian Union. They did not provide for the transfer of the Defence portfolio to a completely Indian Executive. The Cripps' mission failed owing to these three important reasons. Is it possible for the Congress to give up its ideals for attaining which it has been striving for the last half a century? What wrong is there in the Congress demand for complete transfer of power to the Indian Executive without any restrictions? Unless every Indian feels that he is fighting for the defence of his country, how is it possible for him to join the army? Sir Stafford admits that India is not prepared to be under German or Japanese rule and it is said that Britain is prepared to confer independence upon India. Under such circumstances what would the British Government have lost if it had asked the Indians to defend and save their own country? On a careful study of the correspondence between Sir Stafford and the Congress President it is clear that the British Government was not prepared to part with power. India knows very well the way in which the British Government fulfils its promises. Lala Lajapat Rai had declared in the Nagpur Congress that the history of British rule in India was a history of breach of promises. In the circumstances it ill behoves Sir Stafford, the representative of the British Government, to boast of keeping promises. The Congress demands immediate change in the present constitution. Sir Stafford puts forward the lame excuse that it is not possible to do so during the war time. Sir Stafford should not forget that all constitutional changes take place during the war time only. If there had been no war, Sir Stafford would not have come to India. However the talks of settlement have ended. And once again the intention of the Britishers has been revealed.

155. 'What Next': Editorial Hoping That Fresh Initiatives Would Be Taken for the Formation of a True National Government for the Duration of the War

The Bombay Chronicle, 14 April 1942.

On reading the numerous statements and counter-statements on the failure of Cripps' mission the question that comes uppermost in the mind of everyone is: What next? Discussion of the

causes of the failure has its use if it is dispassionate. It will reveal errors which can be avoided in the future. It will also reveal the measure of agreement actually reached and that cannot but be useful in the next attempt—whenever it may be made—to compose the still remaining differences. It is significant that British papers like the ‘Times’, the ‘Manchester Guardian’, the ‘Daily Herald’ and the ‘News Chronicle’ are all impressed by the measure of agreement, inadequate as it is. The ‘News Chronicle’ says that ‘things came so near a settlement that they can never be the same again.’ The ‘Times’ would regard the Cripps’ mission as ‘a vital first step’ in the process of restoring Indian confidence in Britain and adds: ‘The hope will be expressed as fervently in the United States as in this country that what has been done will serve both to quicken the development of free and responsible Government in India and strengthen the India war effort.’

Who Will Take Initiative?

As one reviews the recent discussions with a view to finding out the highest measure of agreement reached, one notices that in the interest of united national defence Congress was prepared to forgo assurance about the future procedure for self-determination. The Muslim League rejected Cripps’ proposals for the future but would have considered those about immediate changes on their merits and separately. It had to reject the scheme because Sir Stafford insisted that it must be accepted or rejected as a whole. The Hindu Mahasabha also rejected the proposals for the future but was prepared to join the National Government on certain conditions which were not impossible. In the light of these facts the next attempt at a settlement—which will have to be made before long despite all appearances to the contrary—would seem to be more promising if it concerned itself with essential immediate changes for the duration of the war, without any prejudice to the ultimate demands of the principal parties concerned. It does not matter much who takes the formal initiative in the next attempt. In a fit of temper, which must, of course, be interpreted charitably but which ill becomes a responsible statesman, Sir Stafford is reported to have said at a Press Conference at Karachi: ‘We shall not take any further initiative to solve your problem. Now, it is for Indians themselves to evolve a constitution which may be acceptable to all classes and communities.’ We heard that often from Mr. Amery. Pandit Jawaharlal has effectively retorted: ‘We expect no initiative from them (the British Government) as they have managed to get completely stuck in the ruts of their own making. We do not rely on the British Government for anything except to obstruct political and economic advance in India. The initiative lies with others who do not live in the ruts.’ It is also highly probable that the war exigencies will compel all the important parties concerned to move in the matter, jointly or severally. We would believe that Sir Stafford’s efforts have not exhausted the resources of British statesmanship.

War Time Arrangements

The success of fresh negotiations will naturally depend less upon who takes the initiative or acts as the mediator than on the extent the British Government are prepared to transfer power to the Indian people at least for the duration of the war. The Cripps draft proposals were extremely vague and would not have been taken seriously but for the expectation that they would be considerably improved in the course of the negotiations. But at the end of these even the Muslim League Committee had to remark: ‘There is no definite proposal except the bare statement that His Majesty’s Government desire and invite the effective and immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of

their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. The Committee are, therefore, unable to express their opinion until a complete picture is available.' The Congress found at the end of the protracted negotiations that the final proposals were, in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal 'the August offer repeated with minor changes.' No constitutional changes were possible and whatever conventions were possible were not to be determined beforehand but were left to the discretion of the Viceroy. In these circumstances it was futile, if not deceptive, to parade the number of subjects nominally transferred. The position was worse in the case of Defence, which was dominated by the Commander-in-Chief not only in technical or operational matters but even in matters of general policy. But, as Pandit Jawaharlal has explained at length in his latest statements, 'the dominating factor of the situation is the fact that India can only be defended effectively as a free country by the people themselves acting through their National Government.' Only on the basis of a true National Government at least for the duration of the war is a settlement possible, it being presumed that the questions about the procedure for self-determination being postponed for the time being. We expect that a settlement more or less on these lines cannot be long delayed. Meanwhile, the Congress has to proceed intensively with its programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency in full co-operation with other bodies similarly engaged.

156. 'Must Try Again': Editorial Mentioning the Response in the International Press to the Breakdown of the Talks and Making an Appeal to Every Indian to Resist Japanese Aggression

The Bombay Chronicle, 15 April 1942.

The suggestion that negotiations for a settlement in India should be continued in one form or other is receiving support from various quarters. The Minister of Labour and National Service, Mr. Ernest Bevin, expressed in a public speech the hope that 'the time was not far distant when a further effort would be made.' That feeling is present even outside India and Britain. An Ankara paper says that even if Sir Stafford Cripps failed the improved Anglo-Indian relations give hope of agreement in the future. The Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs speaking on the subject at Chungking on Tuesday said: 'Both Britain and India are anxious to arrive at an amicable settlement. Though the Cripps Mission has failed for the time being, it is our firm belief that a satisfactory settlement can still be reached. It is further hoped that the matter will not be left unsettled.' Speaking on behalf of the Chinese Government he added: 'We are confident that a satisfactory solution will come.' The Chinese papers *Sin Wan Pao* and the *Central Daily News* are reported to have urged early resumption of negotiations. The *Ta Kung Pao* goes so far as to suggest that Britain, the United States, India and China 'should jointly settle the Indian problem in a Convention providing for a just solution and effective guarantees.' As a settlement is a condition precedent to vigorous war effort fresh negotiations must be commenced without any avoidable delay. It may be expected that fast-moving events in the East and the reception in Britain to Sir Stafford Cripps on his return will mark the starting point of a more genuine effort at a settlement.

Congress Concessions

Our London Correspondent sums up the feeling among the common people in the city in the words: 'If Government did not mean to restrict Viceroy's powers or diminish the authority of

the India office, there was not any point in sending out Sir Stafford Cripps to India.' Mr. H. N. Brailsford, writing in the *Reynold's News* says that 'negotiations have ended as I feared they would' and that 'our mistake was we never offered Indians 'de facto' National Government.' He is positively more bitter than Congressmen when he adds: 'We are asking Indians to gamble not so much over our good faith as over our ability to fulfil our promises. Our Rulers waited till we had lost command round their shores, both sea and air. They may well ask whether we shall better be able 'to defend Bengal then Burma.' As a matter of fact Congress asked no such thing. On the contrary, realising the present weakness of Britain and the tremendous responsibility of identifying itself with the war, Congress offered its wholehearted co-operation on the basis of a *de facto* National Government as without this it was impossible to organise the nation as a whole for war. But Britain, whatever her diplomatic motive behind the Cripps' mission, has harmed herself as well as India by flouting the Congress offer.' Imperfectly informed, Mr. Brailsford thinks that Congress was perhaps too exacting. But soon enough he and others in Britain will know what concessions Congress made for the sake of a settlement. As Mr. Bhulabhai Desai points out, the Working Committee of the Congress hoped to meet Sir Stafford Cripps on the issue of military defence, if the British Government met it on the issue of civil administration but there was no genuine desire on the part of Britain to arrive at a settlement for the period of the war on the basis of give and take.

Resist Japanese Aggression

However, though Britain has lamentably failed in her duty, India has to do hers in the war, for her own sake and the cause of freedom and democracy. If Japan should invade India, the people have got to resist the aggressor as best they can independently in the absence of political power in their hands and all the facilities it implies. What precisely they should do in varying circumstances is not easy to decide beforehand, and the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee will have to give much thought to this problem. But Pandit Jawaharlal has stated the position fairly correctly in the following remarks he made at the Press Conference on Sunday: 'I am not going to give in to Britain if it wants to exploit or rule India. Much less do I want the Indian people to give in or be passive to the Japanese. I want them to resist it to the uttermost [and] resist it in the Congress way, which is open to us, and which might be applied by a large population by non-submission, non-co-operation, not giving supplies, by embarrassing and in every way, that a widely spread population can.' 'It may be,' he added, 'we would have to take up guerilla warfare. I don't know what the Congress may decide. But it is this foundation, and this organisation that we are building up that will ultimately help us to meet the present situations. My general advice is: 'Do not submit or surrender, do not give supplies, non-co-operate with the aggressor, embarrass him in every way. Fighting will be done by the armed forces.' Whatever may be the method of resistance, it is wrong from any point of view to put reliance on the Japanese professions that they are going to liberate India from the British yoke. We know but too well the value of such professions and have learnt to rely on ourselves for our own liberation. Referring to Japan's promises to India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad pertinently remarked at a public meeting at Patna that to believe that Japan could liberate India would be to disbelieve what Japan had been doing during the past five years and that so long as a single Japanese remained in China and so long as an inch of Chinese soil was shown within the empire of Japan all such promises should be ridiculed. 'If we have to die we should die with honour and I would never bend down before the Japanese' said Sir

Tej Bahadur Sapru yesterday at a public meeting in Allahabad. That is the spirit which should inspire every Indian, who loves his country, in resisting Japanese aggression.

157. 'The Strange and Depraved Propaganda of Sir Cripps': Article by Ali Bahadur Khan Clarifying That the Talks Failed Not on the Communal Question, but Because of the British Refusal to Transfer Real Power to the Indians

Hilal-e-Nau (Bombay), 15 April 1942.

From the reaction of the English press it must have become clear to the English-knowing public that the Delhi talks did not fail on account of the communal issue, but the papers on which the general Muslim public depends for information have ascribed the failure of the Delhi talks to the communal differences, although the solid fact is that these talks failed only because the British Government did not desire to transfer power to the Indians. This question whether the power should be transferred to the Congress or to the Muslim League, to the Hindus or to the Musalmans, did not arise at all at any stage of these talks. So far as the question of forming a National Government is concerned Mr. Jinnah has long long ago declared his participation in it conditional upon effective share in the powers. During the war time there was no difference about such a Government between the Congress and the Muslim League from the viewpoint of principles. Had there been any difference it would have been only when the British Government would have transferred 'real and effective powers' as Mr. Jinnah would put it, and that stage would have come when the said powers were to be distributed among the Hindus and the Musalmans. But Sir Cripps did not at all allow such a stage to come. He categorically denied the transfer of powers at all. He desired to keep all the powers under the control of the Viceroy and during the talks it was revealed that the Government which he desired to establish had no powers even to raise a national militia. It would not be able even to arm the Indians for defence. Certain Muslim papers have indulged in a wrong propaganda that in the event of an absolutely free Government the Congress or the Hindus would have been in a majority. This propaganda stands for the disruptive policy of Imperialism. It is not absolutely necessary that the Congress would have been in a majority but it is a fact that in view of the opinions current in the responsible national quarters in this connection the Congress majority was improbable. On the contrary it was also sufficiently probable that the Congress would have accepted for the sake of the interests of the country the demands which Mr. Jinnah has been making so long. At any rate the National Government was a temporary arrangement and during the war the responsibility of the defence would have become so heavy that the Hindus and the Musalmans could not have found any room for demonstrating their old differences. The Musalmans ought to consider this fact and refuse to be influenced by the gutter press which is eager to utter the coinage of the current communal differences for commercial motives. These papers have seen that the Muslim masses are pleased with a particular slogan and thus they go on raising that slogan every time even if the interests of the country go to dogs. You are free to support Pakistan but please note that Pakistan has nothing to do with the failure of the Delhi talks which failed merely for the reason that the British Government did not wish to transfer effective powers to the Indians.



158. 'Thro Politicles': Article by 'Sengol' Doing an Overview of the Mission and Concluding That It Was a 'Stage Managed Show' by His Majesty's Government in England to Exhibit to the World and to America Their Own Sincerity and India's Inability to 'Assume Freedom Even If Granted'

Hubli Gazette, 17 April 1942.

So Cripps' Mission has failed. Foreign Press and probably many here in India still believe it is not yet a total failure. There was abundance of goodwill for the Mission's success. But the diehards alone wished otherwise. They are now glad because according to them it is now exposed to the world that 'elements' in India can never agree to come together whatever the situation may be. This satisfaction is typically expressed in the indecent haste with which Mr. Churchill sent his message to Sir S. Cripps to assuage his feelings at the failure. Or, is it to congratulate him?

The Statesman writing under the caption 'Not a failure' and blaming the Congress and other parties for failure to reach an agreement on the basis of the War Cabinet's proposals-which by the way is only a fancy as we shall see hereinafter-concludes 'so long as the India Office and the Government of India draft the proposals no emissary can succeed ... A clean sweep of the personalities is needed ... Sir Stafford Cripps has been made a dupe but the scheme will over-reach itself.'

There was every hope till the last moment that the Mission would succeed. The Public Press here in India were quite confident of it. *The Hindu* actually wrote a leader on 'National Government' in India. It stated that the terms of settlement had already been known and appeared satisfactory to all concerned and it required only to be officially confirmed. This is confirmed in clear terms by no less than Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad in their statements on the causes for the breakdown.

The Maulana says 'I then pointed out that the defence of the country was the demand of the moment as far as the country was concerned, and during the War civil administration has disappeared because problems of defence permeated every department and if you reserve defence you practically reserve all the power which you say are being transferred to India. Sir Stafford by way of reassurance said the reservations related only to the functions of the C-in-C. The rest of the discussion proceeded in respect of these particular questions'.

As regards the communal question the Maulana says 'I assured him that as soon as the main political problem was settled, the responsibility of finding a satisfactory solution of the communal and other problems would be ours (meaning of course Indians) and I could confidently assert that we would find a satisfactory solution.' Sir Stafford entirely agreed with me and said 'this was exactly what he said before the War Cabinet, before he came out to India.'

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru says in the Press Conference, 'If you had asked me before that interview (that is of the 9th) what exactly the position was, it would have been difficult to say but I would have said there was a 75% chance of the agreement coming'. He states about the earnestness of the Congress desire to come to a settlement, 'To-day the dominant factor is the imminent peril to India and I want you to appreciate what I say. We agreed to things which in the last 22 years we would have never dreamt of agreeing to or coming near. In these 22 years we have stood for something ... For the first time in these 22 years I swallowed many a bitter pill when I said I was prepared to agree to many things so as somehow to come to an

agreement. I did want to throw all my sympathy and the energy I possessed, on the organization of the defence of India'.

Thus in spite of all earnestness on behalf of the national leaders and bright chance of success crowning the efforts of the British envoy, the failure of the Mission was the final result.

About the causes of the failure S. Cripps in his broadcast says 'The immediate difficulties have been as regards the present. First there was the difficulty of defence. Upon that the attitude of the British Government was simple. For many decades the defence of India has been in charge of His Majesty's Government ... The demand has been made that the defence of India should be placed in Indian hands. No one suggests that the C-in-C as the head of the armed forces, should be under an Indian Government. But they say his functions as Defence Member (in the present Viceroy's Executive Council) should be transferred to an Indian Member. 'He goes on to say that to meet this demand an offer was made to create a New War Department to be placed in charge of the C-in-C as War Member to manage the governmental relations of the C-in-C for General Head Quarters and Naval Head Quarters leaving the rest of the Defence Department to an Indian Defence Member. 'This arrangement satisfied some of the parties but not Congress who demanded a degree of control in the Indian Defence Member which might have gravely jeopardized the war effort in India'.

Let us see what Pandit Jawaharlal says on this point. 'In the last interview we discussed the Defence formulae and other matters. We were really astonished that all the presumptions and assertions which we had had in mind for ten days and which we had been arguing, had no foundation. When we pressed him to give a list of subjects, he referred us to the Army Manual and he went into a long disquisition as to how the Indian Army became, what it was, under whose control it was, etc. I tried to point out to him that it was quite essential so far as the Indian Army was concerned that it must be looked upon by the Indian people as a National Army'.

The Maulana says 'In the course of our interview, Sir Stafford Cripps had repeatedly emphasised the technical difficulties in the way of transferring defence to an Indian Member. He had suggested that we should meet General Wavell because he could explain the technical side of the question much better. But curiously enough, throughout our interview with the C-in-C, at which many other Military Officers were present, not a word was spoken about any technical difficulty; the entire discussion proceeded on political lines. It did not strike me for a moment that we were interviewing military experts, but expert politicians.'

Another issue of dissent was on the question of the interim arrangement for the Central Government. The Congress demand on this point has been quite clarified and repeated times without number. To plead, anything newly was sprung upon the emissary during the course of the negotiations, can only be put down to deliberately assumed ignorance of the demand. On this point Pandit Nehru says, 'Sir S. Cripps made it perfectly clear that there would be no essential change, legal, or even by way of conventions to begin with between the position of the Viceroy's Council to-day and the position of the Viceroy's Council to-morrow when it came into existence. Sir Stafford at the interview rigidly excluded words such as Cabinet, Ministers and National Government ... We went on agreeing to things after things because of the immediate pressure of events. We even considered that it might be continued to be called a Viceroy's Executive Council and not a Cabinet but we wanted to know the conventions that must govern the Council. Sir Stafford said that he was totally unable to say anything on the subject because it lay wholly at the discretion of the Viceroy. It was for the Indians to go to the Viceroy later on and discuss the matter with him who would take a reasonable view of it.'

The Pandit continues 'that [as] he put it for the present the whole thing comes down to this that we agree to join the Viceroy's Council practically unconditionally except for the very vague background of what would happen in future. The picture he put forward to us was really the August offer repeated with minor changes. When I mentioned that to him he was very hurt.'

In spite of this attitude Sir Stafford Cripps in his broadcast accuses the Congress of having deliberately maneuvered for position of vantage in political power. He also deliberately asserts the Congress wanted immediate *de facto* constitutional changes so as to make one party cabinet possible in India. The Congress ad nauseam has stated that a National Govt. is the pre-requisite to mobilise the nation's enthusiasm for fighting the war. It meant a National Government composed of representatives of all political opinions in the country agreeing to differ later on about political settlement, but agreeing to pull together for the duration of war and for the nation's cause. In spite of Sir Stafford Cripps' assertion, the various demands of political bodies show clearly that all wanted defence to be the nation's concern. We have it in Sir S. Cripps' own words that even a unanimous demand for transfer of Defence to Indian hands will not meet with a consideration. He need not run away with the impression that we have so soon forgotten the statement. As such everyone can see that Britain did not want to part with power.

Thus His Majesty's Government in England, constituted as it is by the preponderating element of conservatism stage managed this show in India to exhibit to the world or more plainly to America that India would never agree to assume freedom even if granted. For the time being they might have succeeded in creating that impression. But things are not allowed to pass without a second thought. The second thoughts are already showing a tendency to manifest. It will not take a long time for the Cripps' Mission to go into the catalogue of 'British promises conveyed to the ear and broken to the heart'.

159. 'While Japan Advances': Editorial Being Critical of Both Jinnah and Congress for Not Being Able to Come Together to form a National Government

Jam-e-Jamshed, 17 April 1942.

While Japan steadily advances towards India our political leaders will not stop issuing lengthy statements and direct their energies towards evolving a workable political arrangement for the duration of the war. After the failure of the Cripps mission it was the clear duty of the leaders of various political parties to come together and form a sort of National Government shelving their political differences until hostilities concluded. Instead of that we find the miserable spectacle of political leaders indulging in mutual recriminations. Mr. Jinnah has issued a statement to the press in which he persists that until the Muslim League demand for Pakistan is conceded it would not agree to any temporary arrangement for a National Government at the Centre. Mr. Jinnah accuses the Congress of seeking to dominate other political parties under the guise of forming a National Government at the Centre. His contention is that if the British Government had accepted the proposals of the Congress to grant immediate freedom to India and to have a Cabinet nominated by major parties with collective responsibility it would have been tantamount to the creation of an irremovable Executive which would be responsible to nobody but the Congress and which in fact would have been a Fascist Ground Council.

In short, Mr. Jinnah regardless of the fact that Japan's threat to India has become so imminent insists upon his pound of flesh, namely, immediate and unequivocal recognition of partitioning

of India. This demand is unreasonable because it goes beyond the Cripps proposals which were partial towards the Muslims. What Mr. Jinnah's demand comes to is that in the Punjab where there is a huge Sikh population the Muslims should have a sovereign state dominated by the Muslim League. It also means that in the case of Bengal the 46 per cent of the Hindu minority should continue to be at the mercy of the Muslims. The Cripps proposals definitely favoured the Muslim League in so far as it laid down that only bare majority was necessary for deciding the issue of non-accession. Even to please the Muslims, women voters of all communities were to be debarred from participating in the plebiscite just because Muslim women in parda would not go to the polls. What Mr. Jinnah now insists on is that there should be no vote of the legislatures, that there should be no plebiscite even, but that the Muslim League should be presented with certain provinces to be constituted as Pakistan under the leadership of Mr. Jinnah. This type of arbitrary demand is bound to rouse strong opposition from the Congress which was even agreeable to partitioning of India if a bare majority in certain provinces asked for non-accession.

Whatever may be the cause leading to the failure of the Cripps mission the next best thing which Indian leaders can do is to lay aside their demands for the duration of the war and combine to resist Japan. After all is said and done what Mr. Jinnah asks for is that the Pakistan issue should not be prejudged. If this demand is conceded Mr. Jinnah should have no objection to come together to form a temporary National Government pledged to a vigorous prosecution of the war. By a common agreement between major political leaders all differences might be held in abeyance. It is true that if the Governor-General's Council were formed into a Cabinet of which he became a constitutional head, the Congress would, by reason of its majority on it, really dictate the Government policy. In the past unfortunately the Congress has acted in such a way as to alienate the support of the minorities. It not merely ignored opposition but treated it with the greatest contempt. The demand for Pakistan is the direct outcome of this intolerant attitude of the Congress. But it is conceivable that the stress of war and the past political experience might induce the Congress to assume towards the Muslims a more responsive attitude. An experiment on this line is worth trying out for while leaders talk and discuss their political differences Japan steadily advances towards India. If political leaders do not unite right now there is very little chance of successful resistance being given to Japan and if Japan succeeds all political differences would be swept aside at the dictate of this enemy.

160. Extract from Bombay Province Weekly, Letter No. 15, 18 April 1942, on the Activities of Some Evacuees in Poona and Ahmedabad
F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

As soon as it became known that the proposals brought by Sir Stafford Cripps had been finally rejected, a flood of oratory issued from the Press and from speakers of different parties explaining, rejecting or approving of the outcome of the negotiations according to individual predilections. The Congress Party in general made full use of the 'National Week' and addressed many meetings in order to explain their final decision and to blame the British for distrusting Indians and continuing their policy of 'divide and rule'. In this province, S. D. Deo, member of the Working Congress Committee, addressed a meeting of about 1500 persons at Poona on April 14th at which he explained Congress' reasons for having rejected the offer. To the world in general these protestations may seem hollow, but it would seem that Congress are

finding themselves in the position of having to save their face by belittling the British and by encouraging resistance of a non-violent or semi-violent nature to the Japanese attack. In this connection speeches made by a certain evacuee from Singapore named Rajabali Jumabhai at Ahmedabad on April 12th and 13th are particularly noteworthy. Rajabali was a Municipal Councillor, a Justice of Peace and President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Singapore. In one of his speeches he also described himself as a loyalist to the Malayan Government. However, it appears that he is now undertaking a tour under the auspices of the Ahmedabad City Congress Committee in order to describe the hardships experienced by evacuees from Singapore and to complain of the ill-treatment and indifference shown to Indian evacuees by British and Dutch officials during the evacuation. He alleges, among other things, that the Malayan Government showed gross discrimination in favour of British evacuees and alleges that the Captain of his boat was more taken up with wine and woman than in trying to ameliorate the hardships of the Indian evacuees.

In the present circumstances, it is perhaps natural that intemperate speeches should be made and it may be that this intemperance will die down as the war situation becomes more acute. If it does not, however, it would seem to be necessary to take some definite action as such speeches, if allowed to continue, cannot prove anything else but prejudicial to the war effort.

161. Editorial Stating That It Was Futile to Hope for Any Change during the Regime of Lord Linlithgow

Praja Bandhu, Ahmedabad, 18 April 1942

The greatest surprise in the attitude of Sir Stafford Cripps was that he took the Congress demand to be a demand for making changes on the basis of an agreement arrived at through negotiations rather than a demand for making changes in the constitution in a legal manner. He had stated that the British Government would never consent to this basis. It was his contention that, whatever can be done in regard to it can be done by the Viceroy only. But it was quite impossible that Lord Linlithgow would be prepared to take a progressive step in such an important and technical matter. The Indians are not unaware of the sort of ideas held by the Viceroy with regard to his responsibilities towards the British Government. Lord Linlithgow has begun to carry on a unitary Government instead of a Government through the council. And he has not chosen members with adequate qualifications for his Council. It is futile to hope for any change in the British administrative practice during the regime of Lord Linlithgow however much he may extend his Executive Council and add new members to it. There is one point underlying the problem of minorities which was latterly raised and that is: The British Government does not want to part with power under one pretext or another. It wants to maintain its suzerainty because, there are many interests of its own, behind it. In short, Government does not relish the establishment of a national Government. The fact that the dominion status to be conferred after the war will practically come into being from this day and that the leaders of the country may succeed in preparing the country for the future freedom, is a thing which is not liked by the British.



162. 'A Sinister Move against British Democracy and Indian Freedom': Article by G.Y. Chitnis Arguing that the Proposals Were Nothing but the August Offer with 'Glowing Promises about the Future' Made by a Man of Leftwing Reputation, but the Congress Leaders Were Not Deceived

Chitra Supplement, Bombay, 19 April 1942.

What Will Sir Stafford Do Now?

On Friday, the 16th April, the political atmosphere of the country was thick with rumours of an impending compromise between the government and the Indian leaders. Both Col. Johnson, the personal envoy of President Roosevelt and Sir Stafford Cripps, had agreed to the defence formula prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in consultation with members of the Congress Working Committee. Till the evening of the same day, the Indian press was vibrant with expectations about the establishment of a national government at the centre and in the provinces. In anticipation of this welcome change, Sir Sikandar had started negotiations with the Congress with the idea of forming a national coalition government in the Punjab.

A Sudden Change

The next day there was a sudden change in the political situation. Sir Stafford turned down the Congress demand for a central national government on the flimsy pretext that it would injure the interests of the minorities. Pandit Jawaharlal's formula was rejected and according to Panditji's own testimony Sir Stafford adopted a dictatorial attitude about the minority question that would have put to shame the president of the Muslim League. The Congress had no other alternative but to reject the Cripps' proposal. The Hindu Mahasabha had already rejected it on the ground that the principle of Pakistan was recognised in the proposed declaration about the future Indian constitution. The Muslim League rejected it on the ground that the demand for Pakistan was not more explicitly granted in that proposal; in view of this definitely hostile attitude of the three principal political organisations in the country, Sir Stafford was obliged to withdraw his proposal. In brief, His Majesty's Government have withdrawn their proposal before it was formally made to this country.

An Element of Mystery

I suspect an element of mystery about the whole business. I cannot understand why after Col. Johnson, Sir Stafford and Pandit Jawaharlal had agreed to the defence formula, the whole discussion should end in smoke; it was gathered that the compromise was arrived at among these three men because of the numerous concessions made by the Congress; the formula was submitted to the British Cabinet and the inference was that it would be accepted; but the strange thing was that it was rejected by the British Cabinet; that means that Sir Stafford who is himself a member of the British Cabinet, committed himself to the acceptance of a formula which he should have been sure would be rejected by his colleagues; it means that Sir Stafford had agreed to place the defence portfolio in charge of an Indian minister but could not prevail upon his other colleagues to agree to that proposition; if that is so, then the only decent thing that Sir Stafford can do is to resign his membership of the Cabinet on the Indian issue; but it looks from his recent statements in this country that he himself agreed with the decision of

the Cabinet, in which case there is nothing more to be said about it; after everything is said and done we must not forget that today Sir Stafford is living next door to Mr. Churchill in Downing Street.

Long before the Cripps proposal was published, I had given in several articles an indication of its possible outline and my prediction was that it would not be acceptable to a single political party in this country. When the proposal was actually published I found that my outline was much progressive than this proposal. The one fundamental defect of the proposal which, I must confess, I had not stressed was that it said everything about the future and nothing about the present. Everybody had taken it for granted that whatever else the proposal may contain, it would at least embody the possibility of establishing national government at the centre. Politicians of various shades of opinion had agreed that there may be a little difficulty about the composition of the national government, but the national government was a dead certainty. None of them realised that they were backing a non-existent horse. The Cripps' proposal was intended mainly for diverting the attention of the Indian leaders from the present political situation to a discussion of the future Indian constitution; it was particularly to be noted that while Sir Stafford said a lot about defence question, he did not utter a single word about the national government.

Cripps' Status in India

The reason is obvious. While the British Cabinet was quite eloquent about what they would do for India in future they did not want to do anything to-day that would impair the prestige and authority of the Viceroy. When Sir Stafford arrived in India his status in India was declared to be below that of the Viceroy and his Executive Councillors; this small fact should have really given us a clue to the mentality of the Cabinet; but it also meant that Sir Stafford could not have made any proposal that would override the authority of the Viceroy; therefore, all that he could do was to revive the August offer that the Viceroy had made with the added limitation that the defence would remain entirely under the control of His Majesty's Government. Perhaps Cripps thought that the August offer, decorated with the glowing promises about the future, would look very attractive to the Indian leaders if made by a man of his leftwing reputation and the Indian leaders would fall on their knees to accept it. But he was sorely disappointed; his leftwing pride was terribly hurt when in a few choice words Pandit Jawaharlal, in spite of the latter's deep friendship for Sir Stafford, told him what he thought of it.

Disappointed and Disillusioned

Be that as it may, Sir Stafford has gone back to England a deeply disappointed and disillusioned man wrapped in the tattered shreds of his political reputation. He was given the credit for bamboozling Russia into a pact with the Allies. I myself find it difficult to credit the story; at any rate, he thought that with his ripe political experience he would find it much easier to bamboozle the Indian leaders into accepting his proposal; his bitter experience proves that Indian leadership is still carrying a level head on its shoulders.

Cabinet's Anticipations

Perhaps it was anticipated by the British Cabinet that Cripps would come back to England a disappointed and disillusioned man. Perhaps it was the intention of the Cabinet to have him discredited in the eyes of the British public by entrusting him with an impossible mission. I am not surprised that the British Cabinet did actually set this trap for Sir Stafford; but I am

surprised that Sir Stafford should have been gullible enough to fall into this trap; when Sir Stafford has gone back to England without solving the Indian political deadlock, he could hardly reassume the leadership of the House of Commons. Mr. Anthony Eden would perhaps fill it with better grace if not with greater competence. In any case if Sir Stafford could be silenced for a few months and prevented from talking about Russia, that is all that the Cabinet wants.

The Fate of Sir Stafford

I am not, however, interested in the personal fate of Sir Stafford; what I apprehend most is that his fate is linked up with a sudden shift in the international policy of the British Cabinet. Cripps' exit from British politics would mean the triumph of the sinister game that the British reactionary forces are playing both against British democracy and Indian freedom. My apprehensions are based upon the fact that the defence formula prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal with the tacit approval of the personal envoy of President Roosevelt has been turned down by the British Cabinet. This arrogant gesture of the Cabinet not only slaps Indian nationalism in the face but insults the dignity of the American President. Does it mean that the British ruling class is thinking of installing a totalitarian regime at home and withdrawing the constitutional reforms that have been so far given to India? Time alone would give the right answer to these questions. But I can definitely say that the withdrawal of Cripps' proposal bodes no good for British democracy and Indian freedom.

P. S. After I wrote the above article, I happened to read Sir Stafford's interview to the press at Karachi. I need not say anything about the interview except that it utterly falsifies the last lingering hope I had of Sir Stafford's sticking to his declared principles. Does he think that he has permanently come to stay at the Downing Street as a new recruit to the governing class?

163. 'Plate and Jar Hospitality': Editorial in *Bharat Jyoti* (Bombay), 21 April 1942, Narrating the Story of the Crane and the Fox and Relating It to the Negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps and Indian Leaders

F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

All the laughter is not always on one side.

Sir Stafford Cripps may be a brilliant lawyer, a more brilliant diplomat and an accomplished negotiator.

He may indeed pretend to the reputation that it was he who brought Russia into the war. But even he could not have it all his own way.

The crane in the fable had great pretensions for wisdom. It was proud of its long legs and heavy wings. No fish could escape its keen eye or its spearlike beak.

It has heard that the Fox was too wily to be tackled. So it set out to see if it could not raise a laugh at poor Reynard's expense.

It had not gone far when it espied Master Reynard cleaning his brush in a nearby bush.

'Good day Brother Reynard' said the Crane, 'I have some excellent fish from the Gomati river. Why not come home to dinner. You are so fond of fish and you know the waters of Gomati put sugar into fish.'

The Fox did not guess the game.

It had a fondness for Gomati fish. So it accepted the invitation.

When Reynard went in he was courteously received and host and guest adjourned to the dining hall.

In the Dining Hall the Crane was even more courteous.

Dinner was served—in a long narrow-necked jar.

The Fox smelt the Gomati Fish but the fish lay too far deep and the jar's neck was too narrow.

'You like fish' said the host, 'help yourself. Do not feel strange' and all that.

The Fox came home hungry but full of resentment.

Its turn came. It invited the Crane to a return Dinner.

The Crane thinking it was going to have more fun went.

The Dinner was served.

It was soup in a plate.

The Crane tried all angles. Its ponderous beak could not take a peckful.

'Make yourself quite at home' pleaded the Fox. 'This is excellent fish soup—Gomati fish which you so much like.'

The Crane came back—its stomach empty.

If Sir Stafford Cripps did not know the story before, he ought to know it now.

It is a bad joke to cheat people out of dinners. It is not much fun to promise a feast and then to keep the food inaccessible.

Fish may be promised for dinner but the diner could be done out of his dinner by putting the fish into a narrow jar.

Sir Stafford says that Congress wanted independence and constituent assembly.

And he made it appear as if the British Government were anxious to concede those demands.

'Gomati Fish: he told Congressmen.

But these 'Gomati Fish' were put into a narrow mouthed jar.

The Viceroy's Council might be expanded. But it was all, the same Narrow Neck. Popular control could not reach through it.

The people had to remain content with the smell of Power.

Independence and Constituent Assembly lay deep in the jar. The long and narrow neck of interim arrangements prevented the people from ever reaching to their objective.

There is Independence; there is freedom; there is self-determination' the people of India are told.

But they are put in a jar.

The 1919 Government of India [Act] is to continue.

That is the craft of the Crane. The Fox is invited to dine on smell—smell of Gomati Fish!

India is not unaccustomed to these feasts.

And in her own way she has been returning such hospitality.

The people of India prefer an open dish.

If the Bureaucratic Crane has too long a beak it will not be provided with any long jar.

Indian co-operation can be had on the wide open plate of Popular Freedom. But plates are not popular with Cranes.

Sir Stafford has the resolution of the Congress. Let him try his beak on it.



164. Extracts from *Karmaveer* (Hubli), *Karnatak Vaibhav* (Bijapur), *Karnatak Bandhu* (Gadag), and *Sharan Sandesh* (Bijapur) Commenting on the Necessity of Indian Control over Defence during War Time and Criticizing the British Policy of Divide and Rule, Practised through the Non-accession Clause, 19 April 1942–22 April 1942
F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

The *Karmaveer* writes (20 April 1942):- ‘During war time Government is Defence and Defence is Government’. These words of Pandit Nehru are literally true. But the British Government’s attitude is baffling. It is said that the Indians should trust the Britishers; but the Britishers cannot trust the Indians. The British Cabinet’s Proposals to India were withdrawn as a result of this distrust. In times of danger it is the practice in all countries to form National Governments representing all the parties. In setting up such an all-party Government, the question of minority protection and majority rule does not arise. But the British statesmen do not hesitate to put forward such a lame excuse and achieve their ends. The British statesmen probably did not want a settlement. They wanted division under the guise of settlement. All the parties in India were at last convinced that there was deceit in the Proposals. The opportunity for settlement and mutual help was lost. There would have been a settlement if the War Cabinet was prepared to trust the Indians. But what can be expected from those who had come to aggravate differences under the guise of settlement?

The *Karnatak Vaibhav* observes (19th April 1942):- We regret to state that Sir Stafford’s efforts to bring about a settlement between Britain and India failed. India was eager to come to terms in spite of the British Cabinet’s Proposals being faulty in many parts. If the basis of the British proposals was to grant independence to India, why did it hesitate to part with at least some powers which the Congress demanded? It is clear from this that the British Government is not ready to part with power and make India independent. Hence the Congress, without being deceived by the Cripps’ Proposals, took the right decision in rejecting them. Is it not clear from Sir Stafford’s broadcast speech that he came to repeat the same old thing that Indians are not united and that they do not deserve independence?

The *Karnatak Bandhu* writes (22 April 1942):- When the British Government was not ready to set up a National Government, to curtail the special powers of the Viceroy and to transfer the Defence to Indian hands, how should the Cripps’ proposals attract Indians? We are pained to see that Britain, instead of giving up its divide and rule policy is aggravating the differences between the various castes, communities and parties. Is not the suggestion to the province to remain outside the proposed Indian Union an instance of the ‘divide and rule’ policy? Let not anybody conclude from these words that we support Hitler’s repression and aggression. Britain has not given scope to India to play her part in this war. How can India being itself a slave nation, free foreign nations from domination? Do not imperialism and fascism come under one and the same category? Are not Nazism and Japanism the extreme forms of imperialism?

The *Sharan Sandesh* (20 April 1942) held the British War Cabinet which formulated the Cripps’ Proposals responsible for the failure of the Cripps’ Mission.



165. 'Not Insoluble': Editorial Replying to Cripps's Press Conference in London on Why the Talks Failed

The Bombay Chronicle, 22 April 1942.

Sir Stafford Cripps' talk to a Press conference in London on his abortive mission in India is naturally in the nature of an apologia but is neither an accurate nor helpful review of his experience here. He virtually admits that his scheme has been rejected by the country as a whole but his explanation for this is not that every important political party has disapproved of his proposals, but that 'in the general state of opinion in India, it was not likely that any large body of opinion would accept the plan if the rest were going to reject it.' There is always the danger, he says, that 'the one who accepts it might be held up as subservient to British imperialism if the majority of the people reject it.' We do not know if he realises that the feeling revealed by the last sentence is hardly a compliment to British rule in India. He will do well to realise that even the scheme which he sponsored has some of the features of that very policy of Britain in India of which the latter is so distrustful and that for this very reason has his scheme been rejected by all.

The Smoke-Screen

Sir Stafford consoles himself with the thought that though the scheme itself has been rejected, 'the result of the discussions there has been to impress the Indian people and others with the sincerity of the outlook of the British people and the British Government.' It is curious that, though impressed by British sincerity, Indian people could not come to any settlement with him. We do not know who are the 'others' that have also been impressed by the British sincerity. If the Americans are meant and if they in consequence give more help to Britain we shall certainly not grudge it. But mere sincerity cannot make a bad scheme good. Every scheme must be judged by its merits. Sir Stafford naturally finds it hard to acknowledge that the scheme failed because of its intrinsic faults. In the Amery fashion he suggests that differences among Indians have prevented its acceptance. In an amusingly patronising manner he says, 'I perfectly understand the difficulties which the leaders of different sections of Indian opinion have had. I perfectly understand all the things that stood in the way of a settlement, both as regards the future and the present. We regret profoundly that those differences could not be overcome and I think that leaders of Indian opinion have done their utmost in order to overcome those differences.' All people will not be always fooled by the smoke-screen of Indian differences.

Defence of India

With regard to the defence of India even in the absence of a settlement Sir Stafford says: 'I have had the assurance personally from many of the leaders that they are going to co-operate to their utmost to make their defence as effective as possible. I believe the result of these talks, when it comes to a question of defence, will be a good result. Although those leaders are not prepared at the present moment to partake of the responsibility of sharing in the Government of India, yet they will extend themselves in order to do anything they can to assist, in an unofficial capacity, in the defence of India.' It is true that many leaders are prepared to do all they can to resist the invader but that is certainly not due to the talks with Sir Stafford or any new-found love of British imperialism but only to avert a worse evil. For their own sake Indians will do their best. Whether they must do so still as a subject people or can fight as free men to retain her freedom as their Allies do is a question which for the time being rests with Britain. In a

public speech at Madras on Thursday Mr. C. Rajagopalachari said that if the people could defend India without a political solution he would say to them: 'By all means let us do it.' But he pointed out that 'it was just not possible.' Nay, 'he would not ask for a political solution now if it had not been necessary in the law of nature—not as a political bargain.' Sir Stafford says that he does not regard the problem of India as insoluble during the war. If so and if Britain is really sincere about a settlement, it does not behove a responsible British statesman like him to say that the next approach has to come from India, as if it was no business of Britain to take the initiative. Common sense, unperturbed by personal pique, should suggest that, if a solution is possible and desirable for both the parties, the initiative must be taken by both these, jointly or severally.

166. 'Was Cripps Mission a Swindle...?': Article by R.K. Karanjia in *Blitz*, 24 April 1942, Arguing That the Mission Was Calculated to Fail and Therefore Concluding That It Was Not the 'Failure of a Mission' but the 'Mission of a Failure'

F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

I refuse to believe that the Cripps Chapter has closed finally on India. I do not think America, China and Russia are going to sit back and watch Britain and India commit hara-kiri together. I do not think the great-hearted British people are going to keep silent about this stupendous swindle palmed off on India, in a manner so obvious and crude, by their rulers. And I do not think Sir Stafford Cripps himself will allow his loyalty to the Churchill Cabinet whose Ambassador he was, to stand between him and his convictions. There is going to be a hell of a row in Parliament about the fortnight's silly sympathy enacted in Delhi...

Two facts emerge plain as pikestaff from the Delhi discussions.

First there is the failure of our own leadership—that over 60-years of age, embittered, frustrated, stagnating leadership this paper has never lost an opportunity of flaying—to pick up the gauntlet thrown at them by Britain with any semblance of unity, statesmanship or national decision. Let us as Indians be honest and admit as true *The New York Times* description of India as a 'maze of vertical and horizontal divisions.' Apart from the suicidal philosophies of the League and the Mahasabha, Congress itself was sharply divided on the issue of war. Thanks to the efforts of Jawaharlal Nehru the breach was covered, and Congress was able to play a superlatively decent and honourable role throughout negotiations that might well have exasperated lesser men.

Which brings us to the other party concerned in the negotiations, I use the collective term 'party' very deliberately because we in India are still bewildered as to whether it was really Sir Stafford Cripps or rather the Churchill-Amery-Linlithgow-Maxwell Combine that was negotiating with Indian leaders the so-called 'just and satisfactory solution' to the British-India deadlock. I have heard Indians in all spheres of public life express undiluted horror at the manner in which a leader and statesmen of the integrity of Cripps sought to cloud and confuse the fundamental issue at stake in his parting utterances. Those utterances can only have been meant for American and world consumption. If that was the purpose of Sir Stafford and those behind him in this game of scuttle from India he was either deliberately or unconsciously playing, Indians at least have nothing to fear from the consequences thereof.

Luckily for India—and taking a long point of view, for Britain also—this time our powerful allies like America (whose representative at Delhi ‘refereed’ different stages of the negotiations), China and Russia can no longer take a purely academic interest in the Indian political deadlock. From information reached at this office, I infer that Sir Stafford Cripps departed from India leaving at least one well meaning friend with a bad taste in his mouth. This man is Colonel Louis Johnson, the American President’s personal representative at Indian Headquarters.

Now I would ask my readers to put themselves in the position of Col. Johnson ... and make an honest attempt to work up the conclusions which he has no doubt by now submitted to President Roosevelt. Remember it was, Col. Johnson who offered to assist at the negotiations and then recall as you may the nature of the ‘thanks’ he received from Cripps. Remember also that Colonel Johnson (who we have every reason to believe isn’t a congenital idiot) must have received a rude shock at the superbly orchestrated coincidence of Lord Halifax’s speech at Washington, the resurgence of anti-Indian clamour from South Africa and the eleventh hour hitch at Delhi itself over the abolition of the Secretary of State office and the Viceroy’s veto, and the Defence Portfolio. With this data before him we have no doubt at all that Colonel Johnson will be the first to subscribe to Pandit Nehru’s conclusion that ‘it was obvious that there had been some trouble between Sir Stafford and others—OTHERS, AND NOT US.’

Question arises: who were these ‘others?’ Churchill and Amery take the pride of place undoubtedly. Churchill has the knack of breaking his opponents by enticing them into positions of power and responsibility. I need only recall the tragic eclipse of such famous labourites as Atlee, Greenwood and Bevin. Of late the two sharpest thorns in the side of the Prime Minister were Sir Stafford Cripps and the British-Indian deadlock. With admirable diplomacy Churchill almost succeeded in neutralising both by putting them one against the other. Valuable assistance to the British Premier must have gone from India; the Bureaucracy under the Viceroy—and even, we suspect, General Wavell—helped to break Cripps on the rock of an uncompromising hostility to the very legitimate and reasonable demands enunciated by Congress as to wartime administration within India, demands which have the backing not only of Congress but of the Mahasabha, the League and all others concerned in the fateful negotiations. This may appear a grave charge to make against Lord Linlithgow; but that is the conclusion one runs into when one considers Sir Stafford’s evident helplessness to give Indian leaders any assurance in regard to matters which at present concern the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. And in any case we are not alone in this accusation. *The Times of India’s* Special Correspondent at Delhi gives a broad hint to this effect, and the Calcutta *Statesman* frankly accuses the India Office and the Government of India of having made ‘a dupe’ of Sir Stafford Cripps.

Such is the Cripps episode as I see it. Indians are by now accustomed to similar ‘gifts’ from Britain which mean one thing on paper and quite another in practice. For Sir Stafford Cripps, however, we have nothing but sorrow and pity. He failed because of his own weakness. He should have demanded from Churchill the status of his plenipotentiary rather than that of his *chaprassi*. He failed also to create the right type of atmosphere in India—for example, by insisting on the release of all political prisoners before these monumental discussions began at Delhi. He failed again to contact Indian youth. And finally he failed to guard his temper and urbanity after the failure of his mission. But we do not abandon hope ... If this conduct in India was prompted by a sense of loyalty to the British Cabinet, he owes to us at least to ‘have it out’ with his colleagues—and if necessary, carry his appeal to the British people when he returns home. I read the Delhi talks widely described as THE FAILURE OF A MISSION.

Circumscribed as Cripps was I see nothing humiliating for him in that description, but unless he makes satisfactory amends to India in the immediate future, I am afraid the title posterity will confer upon the Delhi interlude will be THE MSSION OF A FAILURE.

167. 'Independent India': Editorial Stating that the Offer Was Not Rejected by United Indian Nation but by Several Political Parties Separately

The Goa Mail (Bombay), 25 April 1942.

The offer of Dominion Status made to India by the British Government through Sir Stafford Cripps has been rejected. The one point that strikes an unprejudiced on looker forcibly in connexion with the rejection is that it was not from a united nation, but from several political parties separately, each rejecting the offer for its own particular reasons. This would give other countries the impression that Indians are not a united nation, but a conglomeration of warring factions and make them wonder what disunited Independent India is going to be.

168. 'No Surrender': Editorial Criticizing the British for Asserting Their Sincerity during the Talks but Denying the Sincerity of Indian Leaders

The Bombay Chronicle, 28 April 1942.

Unable to say anything better of the Cripps' mission in India, the British papers and politicians have been remarking that the mission has at least vindicated British sincerity. That is another way of saying that the mission was paved with good intentions. But it is futile to judge the merits of anything by the sincerity inspiring it. Everything must be judged objectively by its probable or inevitable consequences, neither side questioning the other's sincerity. But, curiously enough, Sir Stafford Cripps, while stating that Britain's proposals prove her sincerity, virtually questions the sincerity of many in India when he suggests that many political groups in India rejected his proposals only because one important group did so. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant regards this as charging many Indian leaders with lack of courage and rightly observes that this is not only untrue but 'grossly unfair'. As against this, most Indians are any day prepared to concede that the British Government sincerely believed that their latest proposals were the best they could think of during the war from their own point of view particularly in view of their repeated solemn pledges to the minorities and the Princes in India.

New Edition of August Offer

Apart from the sincerity of the British proposals, what precisely did they amount to? As regards the proposals for the future they have been described by several British papers as creating a vast net-work of Ulsters throughout India. Of the offer as a whole Mr. Amery says: 'I know of no other nation or Empire that would have made such an offer'. With regard at least to the proposals mentioned above, we hope he is right. The proposals about the immediate changes Mr. Amery himself describes as inviting Indians to 'co-operate in the Government of India as at present constituted'. This is a frank admission that the new proposals are only a new edition of the August offer which was rejected by all parties in India. Quite naturally the new edition

has suffered the same fate. None has been taken in by Sir Stafford's frequent use of the term 'National Government' to describe a body of Indian Advisers or Secretaries to the Viceroy. It being understood that no formal change in the constitution was to be made, the crucial test of the proposals was whether they contemplated changes necessary to create a *de facto* National Cabinet by convention, that is, by an assurance that ordinarily the Viceroy would not over-ride the decisions of the Cabinet. Challenged to be precise in his final terms, Sir Stafford stated that no such assurance could be given beforehand and that on every point the Viceroy had the discretion to over-ride or not to over-ride the Executive Councillors' decision. This position Sir Stafford called National Government but the Congress refused again to be taken in.

No Transfer of Power

The rupture then was with regard to the amount of power to be transferred to the people. That is clear from the record of the negotiations. The question had not at all arisen as to how the transferred power was to be distributed among the principal political parties in India. Not once did Sir Stafford say: 'A National Cabinet would be definitely installed, with the Viceroy as a *de facto* constitutional head, if only you come to an agreement among yourselves'. On the contrary Sir Stafford repeatedly declared that Defence would not be transferred even if all the parties demanded it. If the British Government ever meant to transfer real power, they may still say so. But they do not. Having failed in their mission because of the inadequacy of the proposals, they divert attention from the real defect by repeating *ad nauseam* that the mission failed because the Indians could not agree among themselves. A few people here and there may succumb to such tactics but the country as a whole will, in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal, 'neither submit to British imperialism nor to Japanese aggression', and 'on no account are we going to give up Indian freedom, Indian independence and Indian unity'.

169. 'Saving the Vow and the Camel': Editorial in *Bharat Jyoti* (Bombay), 28 April 1942, Narrating the Story of a Camel Driver in Cairo Who Was Ready to Sell His Camel for a Copper, Provided It Was Purchased Along with a Kitten for 300 Silver Dinars, and Relating the Story to the Proposals Made by Sir Stafford Cripps
F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

The Camel Driver in Cairo is reputed to be quick and ready witted. Indeed he is considered more shrewd than the Barber in Britain and the Farmer in Eire.

Long, long centuries ago a camel driver of Egypt is reported to have lost his camel.

He searched everywhere—town, village, desert and sea-shore.

He found not his precious beast.

In the extremity of his sorrow he made a vow that if Allah restored his camel to him he will sell it for a copper and give the copper away in charity.

So earnest was he in search of his camel. Whether it was the favour of Almighty or the diligence of his search, he finally succeeded.

He found his long lost camel and was overjoyed at the discovery.

After the first transports of delight were over he remembered his vow.

The vow gave him more trouble than even the loss of the camel.

‘Why was I so rash’ he lamented within himself. ‘Why was I so rash’ Who would think of selling a camel for a copper and giving that copper away in charity? What a fool I should have been to have made so absurd a vow.

‘But a vow is a vow,’ he mused on ‘and I should fulfil it. Otherwise everlasting hell will be my portion after death.’

For the whole night he tossed himself in his bed seeking a solution for his vow and a formula for not parting with his camel.

The inspiration came to him.

In the morning he was at peace with himself. He had discovered the formula.

To the market place he went driving his camel ahead of him.

The only strange thing was, that he had tied a live kitten round the camel’s neck. With this strange garland round its neck the camel was offered for sale.

‘A camel for a copper’ he yelled.

Soon a collection of bargain hunters gathered around. ‘A camel for a copper? For me, For me,’ they all cried.

‘Wait a while, my worthy friends’ said the owner of the camel. ‘This is indeed a bargain. But listen to the conditions. The camel is to be sold for a copper. But the kitten in the neck of the camel costs three hundred silver dinars. Whoever likes the camel should buy the kitten too. Take it or reject as a whole. It is a lot and must be taken as such.’

The camel that was offered for a copper could not find a purchaser. It was the hard fact.

The camel driver absolved himself of all blame. He could not sell his camel though he offered it publicly for a copper. How then could Almighty blame him?

Sir Stafford Cripps is not a camel driver. But he came through Cairo. He should have found the inspiration of his great offer in the Egyptian story.

He offered Freedom; he offered self-determination; he offered equality of status; he offered Independence in substance.

It was a camel for a copper.

There was an old vow and Sir Stafford Cripps was fulfilling it. He was giving freedom to India.

Yet India did not take it. Why?

Because there was a kitten round the camel’s neck. There was an interim arrangement marked at three hundred silver dinars.

Elements of discontent, disharmony and disruption were hung round the neck of that freedom.

And India was asked to take the whole LOT or to let it all go.

Indians did want the Camel of Freedom but who wanted the Cat of Interim Arrangements and Eternal Reservations.

The Camel Driver says, he has proved Britain’s sincerity. Yes, the Camel was offered for a Copper!



170. 'Tumbled on "Today"', Editorial in *Social Welfare* (Bombay), 29 April 1942, Replying to the American Press and Asserting That Talks Failed Not Because of the Mistrust about the Past, Nor Because of Fear about the Future but Because No Substantial Offer Was Made for the Present

F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

Following the failure of the Cripps mission the American press has been trying to analyse Indian reactions. There is a wide misapprehension that bitterness about the past and fears about the future had influenced the Indian rejection.

This is not correct. The Indian leaders did not waste their time by rummaging into the past. No trace of bitterness was brought to bear upon the negotiations. No old sore was opened. Nor would it be correct to say that distrust about Britain's future intentions terminated the talks. The Indian people have ample reasons to distrust British pledges and promises. But for the moment they are not worried over the prospect of Britain not honouring that 'post dated cheque.' Mr. Raymond Clapper, the syndicated columnist writes: 'The fact that Sir Stafford failed is largely due to the bitterness and suspicion generated from the past.'

If these critics study the negotiations closely they could see that the negotiations failed primarily on the interim arrangements. About her ultimate status, India is so sure that she is not really worried over Britain's reservations or her ability to wriggle out of pledges. The interim arrangements as envisaged in the Cripps offer gave rise to illusions. First impressions which the Congress leaders gained in the talks with Sir Stafford outlined a framework within which understanding appeared possible. There were talks about Cabinets and National Governments and National war efforts. On the basis of a National Government Congress leaders began to work on a compromise formula for Defence. But half way during the negotiations the illusory framework disappeared. There was to be no National Government but only an amended edition of the Expanded Council. Instead of transformation Britain talked only of elongation and expansion. The talks tumbled on 'Today' not 'Tomorrow' or 'Yesterday.'

171. 'The India Debate': Editorial Commenting on the Statements of L.S. Amery and Sir Stafford Cripps during the Debate in the House of Commerce on Cripps Mission

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 April 1942.

The speeches of Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Amery in the Commons on the former's mission in India were calculated, if not designed, to misrepresent the circumstances which led to its failure. The undue emphasis on the British Government's sincerity, on the proposals for the future and on the communal differences with regard to these proposals diverted attention from the outstanding fact that the proposals for immediate changes were utterly inadequate and, therefore, rejected by all the principal parties. Mr. Amery's conception of British sincerity is evidenced in his remark: 'We should sooner see India divided and free than keep her various elements for ever chafing against *us* and each other under a sense of important frustration' (*italics ours*). The sincerity is also evidenced in constituting the British Government the protector of the rights of various small minorities even after the formation of an Indian Union. We wonder how this reservation can be consistent with the Union's right of secession from the British

Commonwealth, supposed to be granted by the Declaration. Probably the moment the Union seeks to exercise the right Britain would say that it cannot be exercised except with the consent of all the minorities to whom she is bound by pledges and the treaty with the Constituent Assembly. Congress would not discuss the proposals about the future with all their uncertainties and complications about Britain protecting minority rights. It is, therefore, a misrepresentation for Sir Stafford to say that 'neither the Congress nor the Muslim League expressed the slightest objection to this method of treating the subject', namely, 'a treaty covering minority protection.' Congress would never stultify itself by allowing Britain to remain perpetually the 'protector' of Indian minorities. We have had enough of her 'protection' of this kind.

Irresponsible Libel

Sir Stafford said that 'the final break did not come on defence but on the form of temporary Government to be in power till the end of the war'. There was no earlier break on other issues. The initial and final break was on the denial to the Indian Cabinet real control over the administration including defence. That no real control was given is admitted, at any rate not contradicted by the British Government. Many explanations have been given to justify the non-transfer of power. Regarding defence Sir Stafford said that 'it was impossible for the British Government to go further with safety (cheers) and no risk could be taken at such a moment as the present on so vital and immediate a matter as the defence of India.' After the recent experiences in the war the position could not but be better under a National Government with full power over defence. In support of his view Sir Stafford has the effrontery to say: 'I do not believe that the minorities, who contain some of the finest fighting elements in India, such as the Punjabi Muslims and the Sikh (cheers) would have consented at this stage to any further devolution of defence responsibilities.' Sir Stafford is astute enough to say, not that the minorities actually objected to further devolution of defence responsibilities—they never did so—but that he cannot believe they will consent. Yet in India his plea was that defence could not be transferred if it was demanded by all parties. As a matter of fact it was demanded by all responsible parties. It is an irresponsible libel to on the Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs to say that they do not want a National Government.

A Question for Amery

In his reply to the debate Mr. Amery said that control over the Central administration could not be transferred to an Indian Cabinet partly because of practical difficulties and, 'above all, for the reason that there was no agreement as to who should exercise that control.' And he twitted the Indian leaders with not having moved 'one step to meet each other while Sir Stafford Cripps flew many thousands of miles to meet Indian leaders in order to arrive at an agreement with them.' The real position was that, as Sir Stafford refused to transfer power to Indians in the one subject that mattered most, namely, defence, even if all parties demanded it, the question of the distribution of power among the parties did not arise. That is not all. He insisted that his scheme must be accepted or rejected 'in toto.' There was no urge to seek an interim settlement with regard to the distribution of power for the simple reason that Sir Stafford decided beforehand that no interim settlement would be reopened because it was not an acceptance of the whole scheme and because Britain did not want to part with power. When Mr. Amery reproaches Indians with not producing an agreed scheme of National Government, does he seriously suggest, as his words do, that if such a scheme is formulated it will be accepted? If he does, let him say so plainly. But we are sure he will not say so. That, however, should not

prevent the Congress and the League from attempting an interim settlement without prejudicing either party's ultimate aims. As the Congress rightly claims to represent the country as a whole it should take the initiative in seeking a settlement. It will be bad enough if its attempts fail, it will be infinitely worse if it does not even make an attempt before it is too late.

172. 'The British Plan for India': Editorial Criticizing the Scheme and Asserting That 'Success Will Elude Sir Stafford Unless He Is Empowered to Use Very Different Language' Signifying a Change from the Old Regime and Its Attitudes

Indian Review (monthly journal brought out from Madras), April 1942.

Whatever the reactions to the War Cabinet's proposals, everybody is agreed that Sir Stafford Cripps is about the best choice that Mr. Churchill could have made for the delicate and difficult task of rallying Indian opinion to the British Government's proposals. Sir Stafford's antecedents are such as to ensure for him the highest respect and consideration. His frank and unconventional manner, his progressive views and his known friendship with men holding advanced opinions are all in his favour. His stature in the public life of England has vastly increased since his successful mission in Russia. He has won the confidence of those in authority at Home and is a PERSONA GRATA with many leaders in nationalist India. It is fitting that such a man should be chosen to act as plenipotentiary of the British Cabinet at this grave juncture.

The draft proposals of the British Government for ending the deadlock have been published. As we go to press one sees nothing but a dark cloud hanging over the political horizon, though it is some comfort to learn that Cripps has postponed his departure and is making an eleventh hour effort to conciliate nationalist opinion. Neither the Congress nor the Muslim League (if report be true) or for the matter of that, neither the Hindu Mahasabha nor the Liberal Federation would agree to a scheme which, though guaranteeing for the future Dominion Status for India with the right to secede and on terms of equality with great Britain and other Dominions, does not give any indication of immediate transfer of power. The proposals which make promises for the future fall far short of the requirements of the situation at this grave emergency. The interim arrangements are vague and indefinite, and are by no means calculated to galvanize the nation to full war effort. What is wanted is immediate transfer of power, here and now, to the natural leaders of the people who alone have the power to carry the nation with them in the supreme task that lies before them. This, the Cripps plan does not attempt.

The withholding of the Defence portfolio, therefore, from Indian hands is, as one would expect, deeply resented and severely commented on. Public opinion has been truly voiced by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. Jayakar when they say:

- It is not probably realised in England and the Allied countries that Indian opinion cannot look upon any transfer of power as real unless the Government of India is so constituted as to give an effective share to the country in the management of its defence and thus to increase immensely and without delay the military strength of the country to defeat the threatened aggression. We would, therefore, urge that immediate attention be concentrated on this question.

Another proposal with is thoroughly repugnant to Indian nationalist opinion is the one which gives room for the possibility of more than one dominion in India—a result which, if it comes to pass, will undoubtedly cut at the unity of India, which for two hundred years has

been the professed aim and justification of British administration in this country. India has been one and indivisible through the ages, and no patriotic Indian can contemplate with equanimity any attempt to tamper with its integrity. A divided India will be weak financially, militarily and politically and will be an easy prey to internal dissensions and external aggression. Vivisection of the country will mean the disappearance of the great heritage of united India as we have known it for ages.

Yet another legitimate criticism is that though the proposals provide for a postwar constitution, nothing definite is indicated regarding the insistent demand for the immediate transformation of the present government into a truly national government. As the *Statesman* has put it:

Those who were responsible for the limping language and stilted statements of the past two years, although prepared to capitulate handsomely regarding the post-war settlement, could not bring themselves to yield gracefully about the present.

Success will elude Sir Stafford unless he is empowered to use very different language, accompanied by striking changes that will make it clear that the old regime is ended and new men and new methods are at work.

173. A News Item under the Title ‘Advice of Sir Stafford to the Princes: Your Highnesses Bring about Reconciliation with Your Subjects Otherwise Your Existence Will Be Wiped Out from the Surface of This Earth’ in *Nav Surashtra*, a Gujarati Weekly from Ahmedabad, 1 May 1942

F. No. 1018-G-I, Home Department (Special), MSA.

An interesting story has spread among the Indian States subjects-workers at Delhi. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiya had, on being invited, gone to Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the All India States’ people conference. He was returning after holding discussions with Sir Stafford in connection with the future of the Indian States’ people. While he was returning, His Highness the Jamsaheb, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and others entered the premises of Sir Stafford. As soon as His Highness the Jam Saheb and others entered, words to the following effects were uttered from the lips of Sir Stafford, ‘Your Highness, how is it that you do not realise even now that it is necessary for you to come to an understanding with your subjects without wasting any time? The war is in a critical stage; if you cannot arrive at an understanding with your subjects, then your very existence will be wiped out from the surface of this earth’. According to the report received, His Highness the Jam Saheb and his brother princes were dumbfounded on hearing this. Thereafter, Sir Stafford went on ‘Do not believe that Britain will offer you protection for all time to come. It is not possible at all. Why do you not carry on negotiations with the Congress leaders? They are patient and wise people. They are such as will carry on confabulations with you in a very nice manner.’

It is said that His Highness the Jam Saheb replied to the effect, ‘Sir Stafford, you are ignorant of the conditions prevailing in India since you suggest that we should negotiate with the Congress. Let me put it to you. Can you give us an assurance that H. E. the Viceroy will tolerate our doing so?’ It is said that thereafter, His Highness the Jam Saheb presented Sir Stafford with a long statement, wherein he had stated to the effect that ‘Government does not

like that we should keep direct relations with the political leaders'. It is said that His Highness the Jam Saheb had given the idea of sort of restrictions that are there on the Indians princes, and Sir Stafford did not find himself at ease when he came to know all this. After this Sir Stafford related all these matters to H. E. the Viceroy who in reply told Sir Stafford that 'it would be better if you do not trouble yourself in such internal matters at the present juncture, because it will cause other problems to arise and neither myself nor you have any time to deal with them'. Sir S. Cripps returned to England keeping this painful incident in his mind.

174. 'Indian Affairs': Article Written by 'an Indian Journalist', Explaining the Failure of the Mission and Asserting That This Would Not Affect the Determination of the Indian People to Resist the Japanese Invasion

Indian Review, May 1942.

Failure of the Cripps Talks

The sudden termination of the Cripps Congress negotiations in resolving the dead-lock and the British Government's withdrawal of the offer have caused deep regret and disappointment, not only in India but in England, America and China as well. The reason for the break-down had been made clear in a series of public documents, including Sir Stafford Cripps' letter and broadcast, the Congress and League resolutions, Malulana Azad's letter and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Press Conference....

No Indian can contemplate with equanimity the vivisection of India into three or more Unions. And yet the negotiations did not break down on the post-war arrangement. The tragedy of it was that the talks broke down on the interim arrangement and the question of defence, on which India no less than England is keen.

The essential background for this was to make it a people's defence by mobilising millions, trusting them, making them feel that India was free and that they were fighting for freedom. The British outlook was entirely different, deplores Pandit Nehru, who took a leading part in the Cripps-Congress negotiations.

It was distrustful and afraid of Indian people and opposed to the growth of a citizen army and of handing over essential power to the people's representatives. The lessons of Malaya and Burma were entirely lost and some inefficient reactionary governmental machinery was functioning isolated from the people.

Efficient defence is only possible by the closest co-operation between the State apparatus and the masses, which can take place only if the State is under popular control. Hence our desire for a real National Popular Government controlling Defence but leaving full authority to the Commander-in-Chief for all war purposes.

Resist the Aggressor

The break-down of the Cripps' negotiations has in no way lessened the leaders' anxiety to stand as one against any aggressor. Dr. [T.B.] Saprú, Pandit Nehru, Dr. [Rajendra] Prasad C. R. and the Maulana indeed, every one of them, Congressmen or Liberals, is convinced that the only way of security as of honour is to resist the aggressor to the last. 'I would rather lay down my life against the aggressors than run away from my town in panic like a coward,'

says Dr. Sapru. 'If we have to die we should die with honour and I would never bow down before the Japanese. I certainly do not want a change of masters,' says Rajendra Babu. Pandit Nehru has made any number of speeches and statements calling on his countrymen to brace themselves for defence not counting the cost. In a rousing call to the nation, he says:

'We almost forgot everything for the moment (during Cripps-Congress negotiations) except the peril to India and our immediate duty to defend our Motherland. But we can only defend her shoulder to shoulder with our own people, with millions of hearts to action, with millions of stout arms raised in her defence, with millions, it may be of our dead offered at the altar of her freedom.'

Rajaji is definite. 'India is too big a monster. If the Japanese invade India, it would not be possible for them to completely settle down—a task which took the British a hundred years and more.' And then 'whether defence is in the hands of the National leaders or not, it is the duty of every one in the country to remain in his post and defend himself'. 'Only a slavish mind could imagine that Japan would give us freedom' said Maulana Azad, the Congress President. 'We will not tolerate any aggressor though he says he is coming to give us freedom'. Gandhiji himself is no less emphatic: 'It is folly to suppose that aggressors can ever be benefactors. The Japanese may free India from the British yoke, but only to put in their own instead.' Hence, he will resist in his own way-non-violent way.

The spirit of resistance is thus inspiring the people, who are one with the Government in their desire to repel the enemy.

175. 'The Right of Succession': Article Written by J.M. Shelat, Commenting on the Doctrine of Secession and Objecting to It on the Ground That It Gives to the Seceding Unit the Right of Blackmail

Social Welfare (Bombay), 11 June 1942.

The Constitutional proposals brought to this country by Sir Stafford Cripps were obviously intended to serve as a sop to all the main parties which mattered or were believed to matter in the cause of the Imperial war effort. In his anxiety to conciliate the President of the Muslim League Sir Stafford not only conceded the right of secession—which has now been interpreted by Mr. Jinnah and his satellites as being the recognition of Pakistan by the British Government,—but actually cold-shouldered all other leaders and particularly the Mahabharaites who were likely to contest the concession.

Now, the opposition to the principle of secession arises from various points of view, fundamental or otherwise. Such oppositions is in some cases sentimental and psychological; in other cases because it has been felt that the Muslim League proposals are fantastic and impracticable. Apart from the proposals sponsored by the League the right of self-determination and following in its logical wake the right of each of the territorial units to secede contained in the Cripps' proposals raise fundamental difficulties affecting very considerably the basic liberties of the people of this country. Besides, both the Muslim League proposals and the right of secession are based on the theory of Nationalism and race exclusiveness which are fundamentally wrong, dangerously suicidal and have been mainly responsible for the present world catastrophe.

All constitution devisings have one and only one main object: to contrive the constitutional structure in such manner as to maintain and preserve, by checks here and counterchecks there, the freedom of the individual. Even the demand for the emancipation of a country derives its urge from the freedom of the individual. 'It ought to be the constant aim,' said Burke, 'of every wise public council to find out, by cautious experiments and rational, cool endeavours, with how little, not how much, of this restraint (on individual freedom) the community can subsist. For liberty is good to be improved and not an evil to be lessened.' The right to secede is, I repeat, dangerous to the freedom of the individual, which is the sole object of all constitution and law making, and therefore must not be countenanced.

But says the Secessionist, it is illogical to demand the right of self-determination of the country and the right to secede from the common sovereignty of the British Empire in one breath and to refuse in the next breath the same rights to the various units forming the country. The argument, I submit, is fallacious in its assumption and devoid of all historical reasoning.

In 1776 when Great Britain under the regime of George III had been brought back by the folly of her politicians nearly to the condition which the Revolution of 1688 had been designed to remedy for ever and Europe had become incapable of being the home of free states and free people, the Thirteen American colonies found their liberties in separating from the common sovereignty of the British Empire and declaring themselves 'free and independent States.' And yet the declaration in so far as its main object was concerned was defective in one sense; that it was a declaration of the freedom and independence of the Thirteen States instead of one for the freedom and independence of the individuals constituting them.

In 1789, surrounded by the world of absolutism and apprehensive of their newly acquired status, the peoples of those thirteen American States realising the defect in their Declaration felt that their liberties would be better secured by 'sacrificing' the integrity of their States to that of the United States. This was necessary because maintenance of the independence of the United States then was manifestly more in the interest of human liberty than any other policy.

The next stage in the realisation of human liberty came in the early Nineteenth century, with the liberation of South America. The revolt of Latin America from their mother countries and the establishment of the South American Republics brought the American people a new choice. Time was not then ripe for that process of Pan-Americanism which is now recognised and well-settled or for the introduction of these new States in the American Union. So that while the question of union with them was obviously impossible and even dangerous, indifference towards them, too, risked the United States. The Union therefore by way of a compromise pledged through the Monroe Doctrine its full co-operation in guaranteeing the Latin American Republics against the restoration of European absolutism.

Still later, the sons of the men who had seceded from the common sovereignty of the British Empire to set up the equality of man decided in the four years of Civil War that none of their States existing or those that may enter the Union in the future shall have the right to secede and that individual freedom required not only the maintenance of the United States in their full integrity but the admission of the Negro slaves to their Union as free and equal men. With this principle in mind Abraham Lincoln in his reply to Douglas wrote:

'Let us discard all these things and unite as one people throughout the land—declaring that all men are created equal.'

The essence of Lincoln's policy was that the national unity and equality of the individual were so inextricably inter-locked that you cannot maintain one by divorcing it from the other. 'Liberty and Union now and forever, one and inseparable,' said Webster.

Historians of different schools may endeavour to read the history of the United States each in the light of his favourite outlook. It is possible to read into it various motives and causes but it is vitally important to see in the career of the Union a demonstration of a constant thread of causation creating and moulding the main events all throughout viz, the shaping of a national policy in the light of human liberty. 'The essence of our system of democracy,' contends Henry L. Stimson in his *Democracy and Nationalism in Europe*, 'has been the freedom of the individual as against the tyranny of the Government and equality of rights among individuals.' There is nothing therefore illogical for the country to demand the right of secession from the Empire while denying the same right to its constituents.

Still more dangerous is the assumption in the Secessionist's contention that owing to the differences in the social usage and custom and religious beliefs between the Hindus and the Muslims, the latter in order to have their full growth in these spheres must have a separate status and a separate national existence. The tyranny of the majority over the minority is just political and party shibboleth. The contention is nothing else than putting race nationalism in its absolute form. Mussolini and Hitler have carried this theory of racial nationalism to its logical absurdity, with what result the present world cataclysm bears witness to. 'You are nothing, your nation is everything,' once shrieked Adolf Hitler. The Secessionist is consciously or unconsciously creating today under the garb of political and constitutional demands a far worse fratricidal position by treating and having others treat religious minority as a separate nationality.

It was not this that Mazzini and Cavour, Mill and Bentham, Rousseau and Voltaire, read in nationalism. They preached national unity in the interest of human liberty and the rights of the nations as a means to secure the rights of man.

Call it self-determination, secession or the more recent terms of Pakistan or any other stan, the Secessionist's political paradise is that state of political society which cannot bear any variation of belief or thought in its midst. Complete national unity based on the narrow foundation of racial exclusiveness is as barren as it is futile. One has merely to look at the Sudetan crisis and the causes that led to it to appreciate its futility. For liberty provokes diversity and diversity preserves liberty by supplying the means of organisation. This diversity in the same State as a firm barrier against the intrusion of the Government beyond the political sphere which is common to all into the local communal and social sphere which should escape the overbearing legislation and should be ruled by spontaneous conventions.

Apprehending the modern tendencies towards this so-called nationalistic unity and exclusion Lord Acton wrote in his *History of Freedom*: 'Those (states) in which no mixture of races have occurred are imperfect and those in which its effects have disappeared are decrepit. A State which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns itself; a State which labours to neutralise, to absorb or to expel them, destroys its own vitality; a State which does not include them is destitute of the chief basis of self-government. The theory of Nationality therefore is a retrograde step in history.'

These then are some of the basic objections to the doctrine of secession. The right of secession gives to an obstinate unit the right of blackmail and to vivisect the country. It encourages the spirit of ego in the units and foment in each of them that spirit of overbearing exclusiveness which is the negation of human liberty and of all cultural and political progress.



176. 'Will Britain Open Fresh Negotiations?': Editorial Making a Plea for a Renewal of the Negotiations

Sunday Standard (Bombay), 13 July 1942.

Sir Stafford Cripps in his first broadcast appeal to India in connection with the proposals he had brought for consideration by the major Indian parties, alluded to the fact that in the event of the negotiations terminating in a stalemate, the British Government, engrossed, as it was, in the prosecution of the war, would find it difficult, if not well-nigh impossible, to reconsider its attitude and approach the India question with renewed and replenished concentrative attention. On the face of it, such an explanation is acceptable, especially at the time when the statement was made, when the final disastrous results of the negotiations had not been contemplated. Viewing Sir Stafford's speech in the cold and calculating light of the aftermath, however, when the full consequences of the mission's failure come to be appreciated, we are better able to ignore the rhetorical fascination of Sir Stafford's masterly appeal to our emotions, and concentrate more on the facts as he stated them.

While not denying the fact that the British Empire is capable of emerging victorious from the present war without the active co-operation of India, it is no less obvious that the struggle will not be half as hard or as long if the full weight of this country's resources in men and materials are thrown into the fray. Again, it is no less recognised that time is slipping fast, and we have little of this commodity at our disposal before the complete and full weight of the Axis forces are flung into the field of battle, to achieve victory or collapse in the attempt. Why is it then that we are dilly-dallying in the way we are doing? Mr. Gandhi, in a letter to a well-known up-country editor, avers. Time only will show who is right. This is optimistic and beautiful nonsense. Time will show only whether we are to exist on this globe as slaves dedicated to Nazi-Japanese labour or whether we are left free to develop, mentally, physically, culturally, into a higher plane of civilisation. Unfortunately, the same apathetic indifference is manifested by the British Government, who appear to be labouring under the impression that having arranged the Cripps Mission it has done all that the world can expect it to do. It is sitting back now and regretting that Sir Stafford failed to bring India to its sense.

Neither the Indian parties nor the British Government have indicated their willingness to take renewed active measures in solving the Indian problem, while both have hinted that it is up to the other to accept the responsibility of paving the way for a new consultation. But is this attitude morally acceptable? Is it practical? Echo and common sense answer no.

The immediate need of a fresh opening of negotiation is recognised by not a few influential bodies and organisations both here and in Britain. The Council of the National Liberal Federation has sent a request to the British Government to renew negotiations with a view to establishing a National Government in India. It stressed the necessity of radically modifying the psychological conditions prevalent in this country, pointing out that unless this is done, India's maximum effort in the prosecution of the war will not be forthcoming.



F. REACTIONS AND COUNTER-REACTIONS

177. Resolutions of the All India State Peoples' Conference, Rejecting the Proposals for Ignoring the People of the States, 30 March 1942

Why Cripps Failed, pp. 92–4.

The Standing Committee of the All-India States People's Conference in rejecting the proposals said:

The Committee has noted that the whole approach to this question on the part of the British Cabinet is vitiated by the extraordinary assumption that only the British Government and the Rulers of the States count in the disposal of these vital issues. Nowhere is any reference made to the people of the States who number 90 and odd millions. This would in any event have been an extraordinary assumption and procedure, but in the modern world and in the course of the world war that is going on, when so much is repeatedly said about a new order and democracy and freedom, such a deliberate omission and ignoring of 90 million people is significant of the way the mind of the British Government functions, even in these times of peril and disaster. It is an insult to those people and any proposals based on such insults can only be resisted to the uttermost. The only alternative to such a course would be for the States people to give up all their cherished objectives and dreams and submit indefinitely to an intolerable slavery.

In these circumstances, it is hardly necessary for the Standing Committee to consider these proposals in any detail when they are based on unwarranted assumptions and promises which can never be accepted. Nevertheless, the Committee desires to emphasize that these proposals are utterly harmful and injurious to the cause of freedom both in the States and in India as a whole. The Committee desires to repeat what has been authoritatively stated before, that it 'cannot admit the right of the Rulers of the Indian States or of foreign vested interests to come in the way of Indian freedom. Sovereignty in India must rest with the people within the States or in the provinces and all other interests must be subordinated to their vital interests.'

To treat the so-called treaties between the British Government and the Rulers of Indian States as a justification for the political fragmentation of India in opposition to or ignoring the opinion of the people of the States is a position wholly untenable in the modern world. It must be remembered that only 30 or 40 States have such treaties and that in the making of these treaties the States' people had no hand. These treaties were made long ago in circumstances which no longer exist. It is intolerable that these ancient treaties should be made to come in the way now of political and economic advance on the part of the people.

The States Peoples' Conference holds as its fundamental objective that the present States system in India must be ended and responsible government should be established in the States.

In the proposals under consideration no reference whatever is made to the internal democratization of the States. It is stated there that the States will have the option at two stages to join the rest of India. First, in the drafting of a constitution; secondly, in accepting membership in the Indian Union. At neither stage is there any reference to the people of the States and only the Rulers are supposed to decide these vital questions which affect the people. The people of the States demand the right of self-determination at every stage through their elected representatives, and any decision made without reference to them can have no binding effect on them.

In the event of the Rulers of the States keeping out of the Union, it would appear that British Paramountcy is intended to continue together with all the other evils that exist at present.

The Standing Committee, therefore, rejects and condemns these proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet in regard to the States. The whole scheme is a complete negation of the avowed war aims of the British Government and would appear to be an attempt to consolidate the British Colonial domination in large parts of India and to maintain autocratic rule in the States. The Committee declares that nothing short of full self-determination and the right to frame the constitution of the States as well as to participate in the Constituent Assembly for all India through their elected representatives can be accepted or can meet the requirements of the situation.

The Standing Committee respectfully draws the attention of the Indian National Congress towards all these resolutions and statements of policy that have emanated from its executive from time to time with regard to the Indian States and trusts that the Congress will not accept any constitutional scheme for India in which the right of self-determination for the people of the States has not been conceded on a par with British India and in which provision is not made for the same democratic, political and economic rights as for the people of the provinces.

The Standing Committee calls upon the people of the States to strengthen their respective organizations in order to bring pressure upon their Rulers for the fulfillment of their demands and to be prepared for all the eventualities that will necessarily arise in the course of such awakening.

178. Telegram by Sir Stafford Cripps to L.S. Amery on the Likely Reactions of Political Leaders to Proposals, 31 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I, p. 571.

I have now had interviews with representatives of all leading parties and interests and Chamber of Princes. My broad impression is that Moslem League are ready to accept but are waiting to see what Congress will do. Gandhi is, if reports as before myself and Viceroy are correct, wholly opposed, while Rajagopalachari and his followers are in favour of acceptance. Nehru's attitude will probably be decisive and should be known shortly. Crucial question at present appears to be the immediate situation regarding defence and I am doubtful whether revised version of paragraph (e) will be sufficient to meet Congress. This will I think be the deciding question but I can see no way of easing position without making real concession which would weaken defence position....

179. Letter from the Sikh All Parties Committee to Cripps Rejecting the Proposals (with Enclosure), 31 March 1942
TOP, Vol. I, pp. 582-8.

Dear Sir Stafford Cripps,

May we begin by stating that after giving careful consideration to the proposals which have now been published from the point of view of (1) India's integrity and (2) the Sikh position, we find them unacceptable because; (1) instead of maintaining and strengthening the integrity of India specific provision has been made for separation of Provinces and constitution of Pakistan and (2) the cause of the Sikh community has been lamentably betrayed.

Ever since the British advent our community has fought for England in every battlefield of the Empire and this is our reward, that our position in the Punjab, which England promised to hold in trust and in which we occupied a predominant position, has been finally liquidated.

Why should a Province that fails to secure a three-fifth's majority of its Legislature, in which a religious community enjoys statutory majority, be allowed to hold a plebiscite and be given the benefit of a bare majority? In fairness this right should have been conceded to communities who are in permanent minority in the Legislature.

Further, why should not the population of any area opposed to separation be given the right to record its verdict and to form an autonomous unit?

We are sure you know that Punjab proper extended up to the banks of the Jhelum excluding Jhang and Multan Districts, and that the Trans-Jhelum area was added by the conquest of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and retained by the British for administrative convenience. It would be altogether unjust to allow the extraneous Trans-Jhelum population, which only accidentally came into the Province to dominate the future of the Punjab proper.

We give below the figures which abundantly prove our contention. From the boundary of Delhi to the banks of the Ravi river the population is divided as follows: Muslims forty-five lakhs five thousand, Sikhs and other non-Muslims seventy-six lakhs forty-six thousand.

From the Delhi boundary to the banks of the Jhelum river excluding Multan and Jhang districts: Muslims eighty-two lakhs eighty-eight thousand, Sikhs and other non-Muslims ninety-three lakhs forty-eight thousand.

To this may be added the population of the Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot, which is about twenty-six lakhs. Of this the Muslims constitute barely twenty per cent and this reduces the ratio of Muslim population still further.

We do not wish to labour the point any more. We have lost all hope of receiving any consideration. We shall resist however by all possible means separation of the Punjab from All-India Union. We shall never permit our Motherland to be at the mercy of those who disown it.

Yours sincerely,

Baldev Singh, President, Sikh All Parties Committee.

Tara Singh

Jogendra Singh

Ujjal Singh

Mohan Singh (ex-Adviser to the Secretary of State for India)

We append herewith a note which gives some particulars of the position of our Community in the Punjab.

Enclosure

On behalf of the Sikhs we wish to place the claims of the Sikh community in the proposed scheme of His Majesty's Government for the governance of India. We begin by giving a historical background of our case.

The Sikhs are an important and distinct community mainly concentrated in the Punjab of which they were the Rulers until 1849. Sikhism recognises no caste and strictly enjoins upon those who profess it to treat all human beings as equal.

Sikhs play an important role in the economic and civic life of the country and a leading part in its defence. In the British Punjab with their $3\frac{3}{4}$ million population (13.5 per cent of the

whole) the Sikhs pay 25 per cent of the land revenue and 40 per cent of the land revenue and water rates combined, the main source of the Provincial Exchequer. They maintain at their own expense over 400 schools and 4 colleges open to all communities and classes without distinction. The percentage of literacy among the Sikhs is higher than in any other community in the Punjab. They have got a large number of Sikh shrines with big landed estates attached to them which are the centres of Sikh culture and tradition.

The authors of the Montford Report recognized the importance of the Sikhs and 'the difficulty of denying to the Sikhs in the Punjab a concession which is granted to Mohammedans.'

The Simon Commission states: 'Sikhism remained a pacific cult until the political tyranny of the Mussalmans and the social tyranny of the Hindus converted it into a military creed. It is a striking circumstance that this small community contributed no less than 80,000 men' (actually 89,000 combatant recruits in addition to 32,500 already serving when the war broke out) 'to serve in the Great War, a larger portion than any other community in India.'

With a population of over 6,000,000 in India the share of Sikhs in the defence forces of the country has always been out of all proportion to their population. The Sikhs are perhaps the only community which is making an organized war effort by the establishment of the 'Khalsa Defence of India League' to maintain its glorious traditions in the Army. We do realise that with our past traditions and the excellent fighting material that can be found in the Sikh districts, we should have done still better in mobilizing our manpower, but we are constrained to remark that nothing has been done by Government to rouse the enthusiasm of the Sikh community in the way of recognition of its status in the sphere of the Central Government or of providing effective safeguards for it in the Punjab, to which it was entitled on account of its unrivalled position, historical, political and economic.

The Sikhs were deeply disappointed at the differential treatment meted out to them under the so-called 'communal award' of 1932. In spite of their unique position in the Punjab they were not given the same weightage in the Legislature as the Moslem minorities were given in other Provinces. By way of illustration it may be stated that Muslims with 14.8 per cent population in the United Provinces were given 30 per cent seats in the Provincial Assembly as against 18.8 per cent seats to the Sikhs in the Punjab with their 13.5 per cent population. Their influence in the administration political life of the Punjab was further weakened in the formation of the Provincial Cabinet. Whereas in the days of Diarchy out of three Punjabees appointed as Ministers and Members of the Governor's Council there was one Sikh from 1921 to 1926 and one Sikh out of four Punjabees from 1926 to 1937, since the advent of the Provincial autonomy there has been only one Sikh out of a total of six Ministers. It will thus be observed that in the sphere of the supreme Executive of the Province, the representation of the Sikhs was reduced from 33 per cent in 1921 to 25 per cent in 1926 and to 16 per cent in 1937.

This progressive deterioration of the share of Sikhs in the Punjab Cabinet is strongly resented by the community as it has led to encroachment of their religious and cultural rights and the waning of their influence on the political and economic life of the country.

We submit that under the existing constitution the strength of the Sikhs in the Punjab Cabinet should be maintained normally at 33 per cent and in no case below 25 per cent so that there may always be at least two Sikh Ministers in the Cabinet. We also feel that so long as communal electorates continue to be the method of representation in the Legislature, Cabinet should be formed on a coalition basis in the true sense of the word. We may here point out that when ministries were functioning in all Provinces, in the United Provinces where the

percentage of the Muslim population is nearly the same as that of Sikhs in the Punjab, there were two Moslem Ministers in a Cabinet of six.

In the sphere of the Central Government, the Sikh Community in spite of its important stake in the country, its sacred shrines scattered all over India and the valuable services that the Sikh soldiers and technicians are rendering, has been unjustly treated. The Sikhs have suffered a great disillusionment by the deliberate neglect of their claims and omission of any reference to the Sikh minority by British statesmen and the Viceroy of India in their statements made from time to time during the last ten years on the Indian question. It seems as if in their opinion, Muslims alone or the depressed classes sometimes, constitute the important minorities of India.

Although for seventeen years a Punjabee has been appointed on the Viceroy's Council, no Sikh has ever been considered for such an appointment. Even at the time of the last expansion of the Executive Council, the claims of the Sikhs were entirely ignored.

In this connection we should like to invite attention to the decisions of the Allahabad Unity Conference which were arrived at between Hindus Muslims and Sikhs in November, 1932. Resolution number 4 regarding Cabinet read as follows: 1. 'In the formation of the cabinet of the Central Government, so far as possible, members belonging to the Muslim, *Sikh* and other minority communities of considerable numbers forming the Indian Nation shall be included by convention.' 2. 'Further during the first ten years in the formation of the Central Government, *a seat shall be offered to a member of the Sikh community.*'

Resolution No. 7 reads as under: II. 'It is agreed that in the Central Legislature out of the total elected seats allotted to British India 33 per cent shall be reserved for Muslims, 4 2/3 per cent or 14 seats out of 300, for Sikhs.'

It will thus be observed that leading Indians of different communities recognized the importance of the Sikh minority and agreed to accommodate it in the Central Cabinet, and also to give it nearly 5 per cent representation in the Central Legislature.

We favour immediate transfer of power to Indian hands, entrusting all portfolios including defence to Indians with experience of public life.

We feel that in this way alone, the moral and material resources of India can be tapped to the fullest extent and Indians can participate in the war with full vigour and enthusiasm.

The Sikhs stand for national unity and the integrity of India. They would like the provinces to enjoy as wide a measure of autonomy as may be compatible with good government in the country as a whole but they also feel that any weakness at the centre will expose India to internal and external dangers.

They are strongly opposed to the vivisection of India into two or three rival dominions or sovereign states as is contemplated in the British proposals. They feel that such a step would lead to a state of perpetual strife and civil war in the country.

If the object is to give self-determination to the provinces in the matter of accession to the 'Union of India,' the right to stand out and break the unity of India should not be exercised by a bare majority but by at least 65 per cent of Indian members present at the meeting of the provincial assembly when the resolution is considered. A plebiscite on the issue of secession is certain to lead to intercommunal riot of a most serious character and magnitude and should in no case be resorted to.

We are constrained to remark that the proposed scheme does not make any provisions for safeguarding the interests of the Sikh minority. The decisions of the constitution-making body are to be by a bare majority and no provision is made for recourse to arbitration by the

aggrieved party as was even assured by Mahatma Gandhi in his statement on the Congress scheme of Constituent Assembly.

The Treaty which is proposed to be negotiated between the constitution-making body and His Majesty's Government for protecting the religious and racial minorities in accordance with undertakings given by the British Government, will have no sanction behind it. Besides, we are not sure how political rights which relate mainly to a share in the Legislature and the administration of the country will be incorporated in the Treaty. The Treaty might cover the cultural religious and linguistic rights of minorities as such Treaties in European countries after the last Great War did. But the undertakings given to the Sikhs by His Majesty's Government from time to time relate to the position and status of the Sikhs in the governance of the country and not merely regarding the exercise of their religious or cultural rights.

The Sikhs therefore feel that they cannot attain their rightful position or effectively protect their interests unless the Punjab is re-distributed into two Provinces with the river Ravi roughly forming the boundary between them.

We might invite attention to the All India Moslem League Resolution of the Lahore session held in March, 1940, which is popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution, 'that no Constitution would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with *such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority*, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.'

A careful reading of the Resolution discloses the fact that the Muslim League itself visualized the re-adjustments of areas and the inclusion in their separate state of only those areas in which the Muslims were in a majority.

The population of the Punjab is so distributed that the two western divisions of Rawalpindi and Multan are predominantly Muslims and the two eastern divisions of Ambala and Jullundur area (are) predominantly non-Muslims. The three central districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore have a balanced population. The separate figures of population for each district of the Punjab are attached as appendix to this statement. If a new Province of a contiguous area of the two divisions of Ambala and Jullundur *plus* the three districts of Lahore, Gurdaspur and Amritsar is carved out, it will have a total population of 12,151,000 (according to 1931 census) with non-Muslims forming 63 per cent and Muslims 37 of the population. The other Province to the west of the river Ravi comprising the Multan and Rawalpindi divisions plus the three districts Sheikhupura, Sialkot and Gujranwala will have a total population of 11,429,000, with Muslims forming 77.3 per cent and non-Muslims 22.7 per cent of the population.

The Sikhs do not want to dominate but they would certainly not submit to the domination of a community which is bent upon breaking the unity of India and imposing their personal laws and culture on the other sections of the population.

We submit that in any interim arrangement or in the permanent scheme the following safeguards should be provided either in the Treaty which might be enforceable or in the Constitution itself:

No. 1. By delimiting the present Provincial boundaries of the Punjab, a new Province comprising of Ambala and Jullundur divisions with the three districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lahore be constituted.

- No. 2. The Sikh minority in the Provinces be given the same weightage and measure of protection as the Muslim minority.
- No. 3. So long as communal electorates exist, Provincial Cabinets should be formed on a coalition basis.
- No. 4. The Sikhs should be given 5 per cent representation in the Central Legislature.
- No. 5. A Sikh should always be given a seat in the Cabinet of the Central Government.
- No. 6. A Defence Advisory Committee should be set up for advising the Indian Defence Minister and a Sikh should be given a seat on that Committee.
- No. 7. The position of the Sikhs in the Defence Forces of India should be maintained in keeping with their past traditions and strength in those forces.
- No. 8. The share of the Sikhs should be fixed in Provincial and All India Services on the lines it has already been provided or may be provided for the Muslims.
- No. 9. Religious laws of Sikhs enacted may only be amended by the votes of majority of the Sikh members in the Legislature.
- No. 10. No restrictions should be imposed by the State in the exercise of the religious rights of the Sikhs in the matter of eatables and religious performances.
- No. 11. The State should provide for the teaching of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script where a certain fixed number of scholars is forthcoming.

Baldev Singh, President

180. Letter from B.R. Ambedkar and M.C. Rajah to Sir Stafford Cripps
Rejecting the Proposals, 1 April 1942

Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 10, pp. 447–8.

The Cripps proposals are calculated to do the greatest harm to the Depressed Classes. We told you when we met you on the 30th March that the proposals of His Majesty's Government relating to Constitutional development of India will not be acceptable to the Depressed Classes for the reasons which we placed before you at the interview. Since then we have had consultations with many of the Depressed Class' representatives in the various Provincial and Central legislatures and all of them have unanimously endorsed the view we placed before you regarding the proposals.

We are all of us absolutely convinced that the proposals are calculated to do the greatest harm to the Depressed Classes and are sure to place them under an unmitigated system of Hindu rule. Any such result which takes us back to the black days of the ancient past will never be tolerated by us, and we are all determined to resist any such catastrophe befalling our people with all the means at our command.

We request you to convey to His Majesty's Government our deepest anxiety regarding the future of the Depressed Classes and to impress upon them that we must look upon it as breach of faith if His Majesty's Government should decide to force upon the Depressed Classes a Constitution to which they have not given their free and voluntary consent and which does not contain within itself all the provisions that are necessary for safeguarding their interests.

In the end we want to thank you for assuring us that you called us in our representative capacity and that His Majesty's Government did not regard the Depressed Classes as a minor

party—points upon which some doubt had arisen in our mind and about which we asked you for a correct definition of our position.

181. Memorandum Issued by the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, 1 April 1942

IAR, Vol. I, pp. 249–51.

There are several points in the declaration which are more or less satisfactory but, according to the statement unfortunately made by Sir Stafford Cripps, the scheme of His Majesty's Government is to be accepted or rejected in toto. As some essential features of the scheme are wholly or partially unacceptable to us, the Hindu Mahasabha has no other alternative but to reject the scheme.

One of the cardinal points in the scheme which Sir Stafford Cripps has put forward on behalf of the War Cabinet is the right which has been conferred on the provinces of British India to keep out of the Indian Union or Federation. The basic principle of the Hindu Mahasabha is that India is one and indivisible. In the religious and cultural aspect there has been recognized the fundamental unity of India by the Hindus throughout the ages and even unity in political sphere was an accomplished fact in many periods of this country's history. Even during some two centuries of British rule, the political unity of India has been recognized and fostered and this has always been claimed by Britain herself as her finest achievement. Besides, India has been treated as one political and constitutional unit under the Constitution Act of 1935. The right to step out of the Indian federation will stimulate communal and sectional animosities. The other option given to the non-acceding provinces to set up a rival Pakistan Federation constitutes, in view of such Muslim movements as Pakistan and Pathanistan involving threats of joining hands with Afghanistan and other Muslim nations, a serious menace of India's security and unity, and this may lead to civil war in the country. The Hindu Mahasabha cannot be true to itself and to the best interests of Hindustan (India) if it is a party to any proposal which involves the political partition of India in any shape or form. The Hindu Mahasabha, therefore, has fundamental objections to the proposals.

The right of non-accession of any province to the Indian Union cannot be justified on the principle of self-determination, and no such right can be imposed by an outside authority. India has already been one unitary State, and the existing provinces are constituted as administrative units. The analogy of sovereign States entering into a federation and surrendering a portion of their sovereignty for certain common purposes cannot apply to Indian provinces.

According to the scheme of Sir Stafford Cripps, a treaty will be signed between His Majesty's Government and the Constituent Assembly, and such treaty will implement the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government for the protection of racial and religious minorities. In the framing of this treaty all parties and sections will have an effective say. Such a treaty ought to satisfy completely the minorities. If, however, any minority is not satisfied with the safeguards in the proposed constitution, then the question of such safeguards can be referred to the tribunal of arbitration to be appointed by the Constituent Assembly in consultation with the disputing parties. We want to take our stand on justice and fair play, and we do not ask for any rights or privileges which we are not prepared to extend to any community.

The Hindu Mahasabha is not so much concerned with a declaration as to the future, but the real question is whether England is willing to transfer immediately real political power to India

and, if so, to what extent. It notes with regret that the scheme which Sir Stafford Cripps has announced is nebulous, vague and unsatisfactory with regard to the interim arrangements. The Government of India Act of 1935 still maintains the bureaucracy in power with the Governor-General and the Governors as their powerful protagonists. But for successful prosecution of the war it is essential to transfer real power to Indian hands and to set up conventions whereby Indian Ministers can formulate and execute a policy of National Defence, including the formation of national militia and the arming of the Indian people for the defence of the country.

It has been the demand of the Hindu Mahasabha that India should be immediately declared an independent nation with free and equal status in the Indo-British Commonwealth. The declaration promises full national sovereignty in the future, but the constitutional position and status of India during the interim period have not been made at all clear.

Particularly in regard to Defence, the scheme of His Majesty's Government is unacceptable to us.

It is urgent and imperative that if India is to be an effective partner in the struggle for freedom, her Defence policy must be determined and her Defence arrangements must be made on the responsibility of her own Defence Minister enjoying the confidence of all sections of the people. The tragic experiences of Malaya and Burma have demonstrated that apart from the deplorable failure of military strategy, the apathy and hostility of the people who were deliberately kept unarmed, contributed to the British reverses. The psychology necessary for full and willing co-operation in the present war amongst the Indian people cannot be created unless and until the defence of India is put in Indian hands.

We note with satisfaction that this scheme provides for a constitution-making body for framing the future constitution of India, and that the Constituent Assembly may begin its work with the declaration of India's independence. But the principle on which it will be constituted is vicious. The constitution-making body will be elected on the basis of the Communal Award which is not only anti-national but runs counter to the essential principles of democracy.

Unless and until the scheme of His Majesty's Government is radically altered and readjusted on the vital issues mentioned above, the Hindu Mahasabha cannot be a party to the acceptance inasmuch as the scheme is to be accepted or rejected in toto.

182. 'Britain's Socialists Envoy Ignores Indian Workers': Speech by
V.V. Giri, President, All India Trade Union Congress, on Sir Stafford
Cripps, 2 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 5 April 1942.

'Workers demand unrestricted economic and political rights and for this every one of the workers must be united and thus see that the poor man's cause is successful' observed Mr. V.V. Giri, President of the All India Trade Union Congress addressing a gathering of workers of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway held here yesterday. Mr. V.R. Kalappa Presided.

'Referring to the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Giri said that Sir Stafford was a Socialist himself and yet he had not consulted the Trade Union Congress and had thus crippled the demands of the workers.'

He advised his audience to try to understand that they were all Indians first and Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, etc., etc., afterwards. It was only by working on this basis that workers would be able to lead the country to independence.

Mr. Giri pointed out that strike was the last weapon in the armoury of the Trade Union movement and this should not be resorted to for every trifling cause. He stated in this connection that the just grievances of the workers and their reasonable demands for higher wages and higher allowances due to war, could only be considered by the Railway Administration, if they were based on sanction from behind. He appealed for unity among the workers.

183. Memorandum Given to Sir Stafford Cripps by the Liberal Federation, 2 April 1942

The Times of India, 7 April 1942.

Sir Rijoy Prasad Singh Roy. President of the Liberal Federation of India, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Mr. Naushir Bharucha, Honorary Secretary of the Federation, saw Sir Stafford Cripps on the 2nd April 1942, and communicated to him the following views of the Liberal Federation on the draft declaration:

The Council of the Liberal Federation has very carefully examined the draft declaration brought by Sir Stafford Cripps. It welcomes the proposals to make India a self-governing Dominion with the same status and functions as are enjoyed by Great Britain and other members of the Commonwealth.

On examination of the different heads of the proposals, the Council feels that the provision giving liberty to any province not to accede to the Indian Union is fraught with serious difficulties and dangers. The creation of more than one Federal Union in India, having their own separate armies may result, in certain conceivable circumstances, in a conflict between them. It would almost immediately lead to customs barriers and complicated questions about ports, railways, existing public debt, etc., would arise. Moreover, the weakness of the military organization of the one or the other of the different Unions will seriously impair the safety and defence of India as a whole. The Council further feels that communal feelings would be further exacerbated in the course of a decision about accession or non-accession.

All these and other considerations and the serious dangers and difficulties, should be fully considered before His Majesty's Government finally decide to implement these proposals. The Council has always been of the view that the interests of different communities should be adequately safeguarded and that the interests of different communities should have proper voice in the governance of the country. But the proposals now made so far beyond the necessities of the case will seriously affect not only the unity and solidarity of India, but her stature and influence in the Common-wealth of Nations.

One of the effects of the proposals is that the questions whether a province accedes to the Union or not will in the last resort be determined by a plebiscite, unless 60 per cent of the Lower House of the Legislature vote for succession. The plebiscite vote is to be determined by a bare majority. The Council feels that the decision of such a momentous question should not be concluded by a bare majority but that some minimum percentage, say, at least 55 per cent should be prescribed. The Council also sees no reason why women, who are entitled to vote for the elections to the Legislatures and can be and are members of the Legislature, should be denied a vote in the plebiscite.

With regard to the representation of the Indian States on the constitution-making body the Council urges that the people of the States should be given a voice in the selection of the representatives of the States on this body.

An Indian Defence Member Essential

On the subject of Defence, the representation of India on the War Cabinet and the Pacific War Council is satisfactory so far as it goes. But this should not stand in the way of the appointment of an Indian as a Defence Member. Such an appointment will have a tremendous effect in producing the necessary psychological reaction, which will bring Indian people whole-heartedly in the war effort. The Council of the Liberal Federation would also urge the British Government to appreciate the fact that totalitarian aggression involves totalitarian defence and that a total war cannot be won unless the Indian nation, as a united political entity, throws itself into this war heart and soul. Malaya, Singapore and Rangoon serve as grave warnings as to how, even in modern warfare technical skill alone, without the spontaneous support of the millions on the 'Home Front' can achieve little on the military front. It is the considered opinion of the Council that full co-operation of the Indian people will not be secured in the war effort unless an Indian Defence Member is appointed.

With regard to the question of reconstituting the Executive Council, the Governor-General's Council should be nationalized, so that by conventions in the near future, the Governor-General may assume the position of a constitutional head of his Government.

184. 'Sastri Charges Cripps with Playing Imperialist Game': V.S. Sastri's Statement on the Proposals, 3 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 4 April 1942.

'I do not dismiss it as beyond the bounds of possibility that to some (Conservatives and retired Civil Servants) might have occurred the idea, that a weak and divided India could not exercise the influence due to it by right in the Empire Councils of the future' said the Rt. Hon. V.S. Sastri speaking at the Progressive Group this evening on the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps.

The speaker qualified his statement by saying that while the majority of Englishmen were generous with regard to India, the members with regard to India, the members of the Conservative Party generally, and retired Civil Servants did not share such generous ideas.

Mr. Sastri analysed the negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps and Indian leaders, and said that a happy conclusion of the proposals depended on three points; the appointment of an Indian Defence Minister, whether or not the subject of the States should select their representatives to the Constituent Assembly and, most important of all, whether Provinces and States should be given the option to stay out of the Indian Union.

Its Independence

The position to be assigned to India after the war in the British Commonwealth, was satisfactory. The declaration of dominion Status, coupled with the right to secede from the Empire, amounted to independence. He did not feel that even the Congress would ask for more.

The second important point was the offer of the Constituent Assembly, on the basis of proportional representation. This meant not only that the Constitution would be framed by the Indians but also that it would be framed by the majority.

The question of the States was not an easy question. It was common enough to speak of the States as though they meant only Princes, Maharajas and Nawabs. This was an absurd conception. What of the people who belonged to the States? Their economic, social and other problems were the same as the problems of the people of British India.

According to the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps, the princess had the right to send the nominee to the Constituent Assembly. Since their representatives were not there, they would be shut off from full citizenship rights, which the subject of provinces would enjoy. This was hardly fair. Another danger was that the States which claimed sovereignty could stay out of the Union of India.

Analysing the dangers inherent in the option given to Provinces to secede, Mr. Sastri asked, why it was that the Provinces, all of which belonged to British India, should be allowed to secede from the union of India?

Which were the provinces that might ask for secession? Though Cripps' statement did not mention it, it would be the Muslim majority provinces which would be allowed to secede. This was dangerous. The freedom should not be given to any provinces.

Britain's Gift to India

'I have grown up with this belief for many years, that Britain's greatest gift to India is the gift of unity and integrity as a political organ. The unity of India has been the dream of our leaders, and the political aspiration of our statesmen.'

This unity, he said could be utilised by Britain, as a power to be reckoned, a source of beneficent strength.

As an educationist, nothing had given him greater pleasure to instill this idea of unity among the young, make them dwell on it, to cherish and regard it as a precious possession of their souls.

'It was left to Great Britain to weld all India into one nation pulsating with a common aspiration. I will regret it, if I should like to see the day, when an Englishman should break up this India into fragments' he added.

Three Unions

If the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps were accepted, there would be the emergence of three political entities in India; the Union of India, the Union of Seceding Provinces, and certain States with connections only with Great Britain.

'Is this the constitution we should ask for?' he said.

Those who hoped that the divisions would be only for a temporary period were optimists. He was not one of them. He felt that even when the danger of seceding became apparent, the seceding provinces would not be daunted. They would continue. What the future held was equally a mystery to everybody. But it was unwise to frame a constitution which conceded the principle of separatism. What was the use of arguing that when such provinces discovered that they were financially or otherwise unsound, they would come back into the Union. They might not discover the harm for another ten years. By then incalculable harm would have been done.

It looked as though the view was to weaken future India, so that India could never rise to her full stature and take up the position which belonged to her by right.

When separate electorates were awarded, Hindu and Muslim leaders thought that it was only a temporary phase and that it could last for at the most ten years. The evil was hugged as temporary and that wisdom would dawn later. But wisdom had not dawned. Rather the evil of separate electorates had spread, from the legislatures to the local bodies and had, alas, invaded even the sacred field of education.

The tendency to separatism had become so rampant that one day women might start saying 'Man has been our eternal enemy. Down with him!'

‘For those who thought of persuading the Muslims to be one with the rest, I say this “two days ago there was a chance. The desire to break away has now become irresistible.”’

A modern discovery

Referring to the optimists who thought that the partitioning India would bring about perpetual brotherhood and cordiality between the major communities, Mr. Sastri said that it was a modern discovery that to establish perfect cordiality, the thing to do was to break up. It was as good as breaking up marriages, as the parties might become more friendly afterwards.

Divide et Impera

‘I say that the British people have neglected all opportunities of speaking boldly and freely when the demand for the breaking up of India began. They deliberately allowed the idea to grow to balance the growing strength of the Congress. They raised the devil, but they can’t lay the ghost.’ It was the clear duty of the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy to nip it in the bud.

On the one side there was the Muslim League becoming more and more defiant. On the other was the Hindu Mahasabha which attacked the league with its own weapons. To put group against group, was this the way to govern a country?

Now the British Government had discovered that they could not please all. It was a question of choosing between the communities. The greatest commiseration was due to a Government which had allowed two organizations to become so defiant. Now they had to discover which was the community they could displease with greater impunity. There were some evils for which there was no remedy. They had to be endured.

In conclusion he said that perhaps the future held the germ of a solution. When the overpowering and apprehension of the present were removed, perhaps the Hindus and the Muslims might come nearer.

But meanwhile he hoped that no promise was given which gave the provinces the right to secede.

185. ‘Gandhiji Was Not Consulted’: T.B. Saprú’s Statement to the Press Denying M.K. Gandhi’s Influence on His Memorandum Given to Sir Stafford Cripps, 3 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 4 April 1942.

Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú has issued the following statement to the Press:

My attention has been drawn to certain statements in the Press insinuating that I saw Mahatma Gandhi before submitting my memorandum to Sir Stafford Cripps.

That I was asked by a friend to see Mahatma Gandhi is true. That I discussed the general situation with him is also true. But Mahatma Gandhi had nothing to do with my memorandum. He has never seen it and I did not discuss its contents with him.

My memorandum was finally ready at least a day before I saw the Mahatma, though it was delivered to Sir Stafford Cripps on the day on which I saw the Mahatma.

Again it is wholly untrue, as suggested in some papers, that I know anything about, or favour the appointment of an Indian Member for Defence Co-ordination. Both Dr. Jayakar

and I are waiting for Sir Stafford Cripps consent to issue the memorandum which alone can show what position we have taken in regard to the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps.

Statements of this character are made apparently to create certain prejudices.

186. 'America as Guarantor': News Clippings from the American Press on the Proposals, 3 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 4 April 1942.

Several important papers, including the 'Washington Post' the 'Christian Science Monitor' and the 'New York Post' suggest that America might act as mediator or guarantor of British Promises.

India Can't Be Blamed

Two Kansas Papers '*Topeka Capita*' and *Wichita Beacon* say that India cannot be blamed for objections since Britain has failed to keep so many past promises to India.

The Christian Science Monitor: 'To ask Indians to trust Britain may be more than they are prepared to do. But today they should trust friends the world over.'

The New York Post: 'England's promise of Indian freedom has been spoken of as a post-dated cheque. All right, call it that. All the 26 United Nations, Including America, will endorse it. If that is not security there is no security in the world.'

The Washington Post: 'Washington's leading morning paper states: India's quibbling ... the British offer to India was so fair and decent and an alternative so suicidal that the conclusion is forced on the American people that suspicion of Britain is almost ineradicable.

That's the reason that other members of the United Nations should take action. The President might be well advised to explore the situation with a view to exploring possibilities of mediation.'

The Oregon Journal, leading Pacific north-west paper says: 'Sir Stafford Cripps has brought to India a straightforward and genuine plan for Indian independence. If Indian leaders refuse it they may jeopardize India's chances for independence and freedom of the world.'

The New York Herald says: 'Will ancient grudges and old distrust of British promises this time put in most positive and public form and guaranteed by the public support of Britain and also the United States—will abstractions belonging to the past, lead Indian leaders into betrayal of their people whose fate hangs in the balance?

'The press of India complains that the American press does not understand the nuances of the problem. Perhaps, but Americans understand the essentials of the problem because they know what is freedom. They know that not only for India, China and Australia, but for themselves there will be no freedom unless the enemies of freedom are destroyed for ever. This is the essential reality, in the Indian situation.'

The New York Herald Tribune today commenting on Indian press protests says: 'The British plan seemed the dawn of a new future. There were high hopes in the United States that it would promptly be accepted as the basis whereon India could be saved from the present imminent danger and whereon India's future greatness could be built up. Instead it has been rejected by Indian leaders with an offer of counter-proposals. If this means that Indians prefer invasion and enslavement and perhaps civil war to a reasonable effort at compromise American disappointment will of course be bitter and deep.'

Radio Comments

Radio comment by Mr. H.V. Kaltenborn on the national Broad-Casting company says: 'Many who have long defended the cause of Indian freedom are disturbed by the attitude of Indian leaders. Without British help Indians are defenceless.'

Miss Dorothy Thompson on 'The Blue Radio', New York says: 'One would think that the formation of the Pacific Council would assure India that her defence is part of the defence of the whole democratic world. My personal sympathies at this moment are with Sir. S. Cripps, not with Mr. Gandhi who plays the meek saint in an iron age.'

Mr. Hillman on the 'Blue Radio' says: 'Only the Japanese can win if these talks remain academic.'

Mr. Quincy Howe, broadcasting from New York says: 'Perhaps the Chinese and Americans might persuade the Indians to meet the British half way as America has already persuaded Britain to meet India half way'.

187. Joint Memorandum of T.B. Saprú and M.R. Jayakar on Cripps Proposals, 4 April 1942

IAR, Vol. I, pp. 247-9.

We observe from the draft declaration that excepting clause (e) there is very little in the declaration about the changes to be introduced in the constitution of the Government of India during the period of the war. It may be that instructions have been or may be issued to his Excellency the Viceroy to bring about the necessary changes in the composition and the constitution of the Executive Government.

If any such instructions have been issued, we are not aware of them, but we must point out that Indian opinion attaches the greatest importance to the transfer of real power in the Central Government at the present moment, and it is for this reason that we emphasize the necessity of the complete non-officialization of Government without the reservation of any portfolio during the interim period.

We have considered the terms of clause (e) as originally given to us and as subsequently amended by Sir Stafford Cripps. In the amended clause, we find it stated that, while His Majesty's government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as a part of their world war effort, the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. We have carefully considered the terms of this amended clause particularly in the light of the speech of Sir Stafford Cripps at the Press conference, a summary of which appeared in the Press on March 30, 1942. It is stated therein that Sir Stafford Cripps was emphatic that handing over political control and direction of Defence, in the midst of the war, to the Indian Government would be fatal, and further that if Indian leaders insisted on absolute control over defence before accepting the scheme, then the scheme would fall through.

We realise that the transfer of absolute control over defence at the present juncture, when it is necessary that there should be unity of direction and control of military policy, would not be in the best interests of England and India. But we fail to see how this end will fail to be achieved by the appointment of an Indian Defence Member, who, we presume, will be a

man possessed of a due sense of responsibility and would be only too willing to accept expert advice and to work in the closest co-operation with the War Cabinet.

While we appreciate the necessity of unity of policy and control in matters of defence, we think, in common with most of our country-men, that the appointment of an Indian Member-in-Charge of Defence, working in close association and co-operation with the War Cabinet and willing to accept expert advice, will be taken, at this stage, as an unmistakable token of the reality of the transfer of such power and as a symbol of the confidence of His Majesty's Government in the people of this country. We have no doubt that the object of His Majesty's Government is that the people of this country should feel that this is their own war, but we feel that the requisite sense of responsibility for the defence of the country can best be stimulated by an appeal to their sense of pride and self-esteem, and by the two countries—England and India—completely identifying themselves with each other in the common cause of defending this country. We strongly hold that it would be a mistake to ignore the strength of the sentiment of the people on this subject.

We desire to state unequivocally that we are strongly in favour of the Indian people rendering every possible help in the successful prosecution of the war. At the same time, we feel equally clearly that in order to achieve that end, it is necessary that, during the period of the war, there should be an Indian Defence Member of the Council of the Governor-General. We are fully aware of the arguments to the contrary and we do not wish to over look or minimize them; but we feel that the arguments in favour of the adoption of this step are overwhelming.

The adoption of an Indian Defence Member will have a great effect on Indian psychology. It will inspire the people with confidence and materially help in altering the present mentality of the people which, in our opinion, is not adequately zealous in the successful prosecution of the war. We do not in the slightest degree desire that there should be any conflict between his powers and those of the Commander-in-Chief in technical matters or in decisions about the movements or disposition of the troops or similar other matters. We think that the presence of such a member will, far from weakening the military position in India, strengthen it, and the political effects of this step will be very wholesome.

Besides, there are, in our opinion, large and inexhaustible resources of man-power remaining untapped in the youth of the country, which can be mobilized by methods which a Defence Member drawn from the people can alone effectively employ. His approach to this storehouse of strength will be by methods vitally different from those which the British official mind has hitherto employed with such little effect. The successful way in which the people of China, Russia and even the small Philippine islands have resisted the overwhelming forces of Japanese aggression, contrasted with the debacle in Malaya, Singapore and Rangoon graphically illustrates the difference between a struggle carried on by the people of a country under the direction of their own leaders and another pursued with the aid of a professional army guided and directed by officers who are drawn from a different race. We venture to suggest that, at this critical time, when the danger is daily approaching, the old world ideas of keeping Indians in the perpetual position of unarmed helplessness and also the feelings of distrust and suspicion which have led to this policy, should be forthwith abandoned and a new era of hope and confidence inaugurated, leading to a joint effort by England and India on terms of mutual reliance, association and truthfulness. It is only such an association that would be productive of the maximum effort of this country, resulting eventually in a victory, based on the self-esteem, honour and willing sacrifice of a proud people.

On all these grounds, we desire strongly to press the inclusion of an Indian Defence Member in the Executive Council as otherwise, the declaration, whatever its other merits may be, will fail to achieve the object it is intended to serve. It should not, in our opinion, be difficult to define the spheres of activity of the Defence Member and of the Commander-in-Chief so as to avoid conflict; nor should it be difficult to secure close co-operation and co-ordination between the two.

'The second point to which we desire to advert relates to clause C (1) of the proposed declaration. While we recognize the justice of allowing any province of British India the liberty of remaining out of the new constitution and of retaining its present constitutional position, we are not free from considerable doubt and anxiety about the wisdom of the further provision which makes it possible for another Federal Union being established. Such a Federal Union may, in certain conceivable circumstances, be a rival or hostile union. But apart from this, we cannot favour any step which may have the effect of breaking up the integrity of the country fostered by a long succession of Hindu and Muslim emperors and a galaxy of British administrators. We are convinced that the creation of more than one Union, howsoever consistent in theory with the principle of self-determination, will be disastrous to the lasting interests of the country and to its integrity and security.

In the draft declaration which has been handed over to us we do not find any indication of the precise majority of votes which will be required in a provincial legislature to carry a resolution as to whether the province will or will not adhere to the union. We are, however, of the opinion that in a matter of this momentous character the method of bare majority cannot be adopted and that the majority required for any decision on this question should not be less than 65 p.c. of the Indian members of the Lower House at which the resolution is passed. We do not think that a decision in which the Indian population is primarily interested should be allowed to be influenced by the votes of European members to whom the question of remaining in one Federation or another cannot be of the same importance as it is to the Indian members. We are also strongly of the opinion that once this principle of a prescribed majority of votes in a legislature is accepted, it would not only be superfluous but might easily lead to grave social disorder if resort were to be had to the further device of a plebiscite of the adult population of the province. We feel that in the existing circumstances of the country, such a plebiscite, howsoever democratic in theory, is bound to lead to serious consequences, gravely disturbing peace and tranquility not only in the province concerned, but in other areas to which the contagion may easily spread, leading to violent communal or religious conflicts. For these reasons we cannot conceal our grave concern as to the wisdom and expediency of provisions making it possible for some provinces to combine into a separate union.

We attach importance to the possibility of the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities coming to some mutual agreement before the cessation of hostilities—an agreement which may secure and safeguard the interests of all minorities by providing for (a) their representation in the legislature, (b) in the Government to be established, and (c) reservation to them of the fullest liberty in matters of conscience, religion and culture. If the contending parties begin to work together in a common cause during the interim period, they will, we hope, learn to appreciate one another's point of view, and a spirit of tolerance and confidence may be generated conducive to a final settlement, which will secure the position of the minorities in the fullest measure without causing a disruption of the well-established integrity of the country.

If, however, all attempts during the intervening period to secure one Federal Union unhappily fail and the overwhelming wishes of the provinces to have a separate union are indicated through their legislatures, and the evils pointed above of having a separate union are prevented or mitigated, we have no objection to the experiment, suggested in the draft declaration being made subject, of course, to what we have stated above.

Lastly, we desire to call attention to the necessity of the restoration in the provinces of a popular form of Government. There is no reference to this question in the draft declaration probably because it is intended to leave it for decision by the new Government which is to be established at the Centre. We consider, however, that the rule which at present prevails in so many provinces under Section 93 of the Government of India Act should be brought to an immediate end and their administration restored once more to popular control. If for the successful working of the Provincial Governments it should be necessary to establish coalition Governments, we would indeed welcome such an arrangement.

On all other points arising out of the draft declaration of Sir Stafford Cripps we do not wish to say anything more than that we are in general agreement with the line adopted by His Majesty's Government.

188. M.A. Jinnah's Presidential Address at the 29th Session of All India Muslim League at Allahabad, 4 April 1942

S.S. Pirzada (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, 1906-47*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 383-9.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very sincerely for the great reception that you gave me at the station. I am proud to see that every month, every year, the Muslim League is going forward by leaps and bounds. I also thank the All India Muslim League that they have honoured me by electing me as President for this year. I congratulate all the workers and office-bearers who have toiled and worked from day to day for the last three months in making all these preparations that we see here. Let me tell you that as we are growing in our strength, we are growing in our power of organizing and managing our affairs better and better every day.

Now I wish to tell you and want to pick up the thread since we met at Madras last year in our annual session. At Madras we defined our policy, we defined our ideology, we defined our programme, and I appeal to everyone of you kindly to read that speech of mine again and study it—not only study it, but I appeal to everyone of you that you should make some beginning in one direction or other with regard to the programme and the policy that we have laid down. I do not want to go on repeating things. There was a time when it was necessary to repeat things to make our people and those who opposed us understand us. The propaganda of the League and the literature and the meetings and conferences that are being held throughout India, our press and even our opponents' press have enlightened us now as to what the real issues are before us.

Less Talk, More Work

Now let us talk less and work more. Not only that; but the grave international situation and the war that is now on our very borders, and almost at our gates—that must force us to realize how grave the danger is in front of us, and we do not know what is going to happen.

But, ladies and gentlemen, I must earnestly appeal to you. Musalmans, organize yourselves to meet all eventualities whatever may happen. These are obvious truths that I am telling you, and I really don't think that I should now go on labouring the point because, in my judgment, to pick up the analogy, you are no longer infants, you have reached the age of discretion, and can act accordingly. On that point I shall say no more.

The Cripps Mission

I know that the uppermost subject which is today not only engaging the attention of all India, but is also engaging the attention of the whole world, is the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of His Majesty's Government. You have been following it from day to day. Now I want to tell you as far as it is possible for me, and explain to you as shortly as I can, this draft declaration of proposals. Mark the words that it is a draft declaration. These are proposals which have emanated from His Majesty's Government, and they have come to the conclusion that they are 'just and final'. Let us examine them and let us understand them. I am not going into details; I am going to pick up the main points.

The main points that emerge from this document are as follows. First, the object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect and in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs. Here there may be some doubts as to the functions and the powers. There are three things—first status, then comes power and finally functions. But that is a matter which will have to be considered when we come to the signing of a treaty or treaties with one Dominion or two Dominions or more.

The next point that emerges is that immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described here after, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India. So we shall have an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution. I shall deal with it when I come to the clause which lays down how that Constitution-making body will be set up and how it will be composed.

Third, there is a provision for the fortification of the Indian States.

Fourth, His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed. But subject to this, there are exceptions.

The first exception is the right of any British Indian province that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides. That is to say, the Constitution-making body, when it completes the framing of the constitution and when that Constitution, so framed, emerges from the deliberations of the Constitution-making body—which will be, remember, a sovereign body—then it would be open for any province or provinces to say, 'We are not in agreement with this Constitution, and therefore we are not prepared to accede to this Constitution.' But the most vital point and the most important of all the points, so far as we are concerned particularly, is as to how that province or provinces will express their will and exercise their right. And that is not in the document. But a suggestion has been thrown out by Sir Stafford Cripps, and the suggestion is that if a province, in the Legislative Assembly of the province, is in favour of accession by 60 per cent votes, then there will be an end of it. It means that the province is bound to accede. But if they get 59 per cent votes and the minority happens to be 41 per cent, then there will be a plebiscite of the people of the province. Then of course, the

non-acceding provinces can, among themselves, by the same process, form another Union or a Dominion, or any single province may stand by itself as a Dominion. That is the corollary.

Then comes the provision for treaty—the treaty or treaties which will have to be signed and made with the Dominion or Dominions that may be set up as well as with the Indian States acceding or not acceding.

I told you that I would refer to the actual clauses of the proposals and how the Constitution-making body will be set up or formed, and the provision is this. Immediately upon the end of hostilities, the Constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless leaders of the principal communities agree to some other machinery before the end of the hostilities. So at the end of the hostilities the Constitution-making body will be composed by this method: ‘Immediately upon the results being known of the provincial elections which would be necessary at the end of the hostilities, the entire membership of the lower Houses of all Provincial Legislatures shall as a single electoral college proceed to elect the Constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral colleges.’ Therefore, I think you understand that all the members of the Assemblies of 11 provinces will meet together as one single electoral college, and they will be roughly 1,600 members, and they will be entitled to elect one-tenth, which means, in all, 160 members by means of proportional representation. That is the Constitution-making body.

After that we come to the Indian States who will be invited to send their representatives, and the number will be according to their population. But how they will be chosen it is not mentioned at all in this document—whether by nomination or some method of election. Now, gentlemen, this is the document so far as the future is concerned.

But then there is a provision for the present also and that provision in this. While during the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed, His Majesty’s Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India; they desire and invite the effective and immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of their Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India. The important words, ladies and gentlemen, are that the responsibility for the defence of India will be that of His Majesty’s Government, and the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people will be invited in the counsels of their country.

This was the original wording, but later on it was modified in this way: ‘During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution might be framed, His Majesty’s Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort.’ But this is a change in the wording.

The task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the people of India. Then they say that His Majesty’s Government desire ‘to invite the effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections in the counsels of their country.’

What the Document Means

Now, ladies and gentlemen, that is the document, and let me put in a few words what it means and how I understand it. It means, whatever may be the constitutional implications of the status

and the powers of the Dominion or the Dominions that may be set up, the main objective is the creation of a new Indian Union. We start with that. For that purpose a Constitution-making body will be set up which will be the sovereign body. A sovereign body will start—to use the language of Sir Stafford Cripps—with a preference for an All India Union.

Think what will be the composition of that body. The composition of that body would be that first of all it will be elected from amongst the member of the 11 Assemblies meeting together as one college and by means of proportional representation, not separate electorates. When that body is formed, I cannot conceive how they can come to any other conclusion except the Union; and that is why it is so composed.

But after the Constitution-making body has framed its Constitution by a bare majority, it is true that any single province or provinces who do not approve of that Constitution are given a chance to go through another test which I shall explain hereafter. But remember that, at the most, Musalmans, even by separate electorates, will not be more than 25 per cent; but by the system of proportional representation, they might be less in number in the Constitution-making body. So the overwhelming majority will be non-Muslim and therefore, the probabilities are contemplated that the Constitution may by a majority be in favour of only one Union.

The other point which is not there is: Will the decision of this Constitution-making body be taken by a bare majority or not? Reading that document, as I do, clearly it cannot be anything else, because it is the accepted rule of every document that when we want to lay down a specific majority we state so. If you do not so state, then it means the rule of a bare majority. For instance, in our own Constitution we have the clause that our Constitution cannot be changed except by a majority of two-thirds. So that is the Constitution-making body. If I may comment on this a little, Mr. Gandhi will come to this Constitution-making body with a dead certainty of getting a Constitution which will emerge for an All India Union.

Now when that is done, the province or provinces which would feel unhappy are given the consolation, 'No no, you have yet another chance before you are killed.' (Laughter) And what is that chance? The chance is this, and it is not in the document but a suggestion of Sir Stafford Cripps (of course, various suggestions have been made; we shall also make our suggestions when the time comes; but at present he has made a suggestion): He says, 'Look here, if 41 per cent are against it then a plebiscite.' Of course, the plebiscite of the province.

Whose self-determination do you want to ascertain? Self-determination of the two nations put together or one nation alone? The answer is, of course, of both together.

That is another chance; and if you get the plebiscite in your favour then at least you will escape the slaughter-house before our *qurbani* is made. (Laughter). This is a point of the most vital character so far a Muslim India is concerned.

Recognition of Principles of Pakistan and Muslim Self-Determination

Then with regard to the present, gentlemen, I can tell you nothing except what is contained in this document; because it entirely depends on as to what will be the final picture, and I cannot throw any light on it. I have explained to you, and I hope correctly, and if I am not correct I shall certainly stand corrected by Sir Stafford Cripps or anybody else. After explaining the draft declaration of the proposals, I think I am echoing your feelings when I say that the Musalmans feel deeply disappointed that the entity and integrity of the Muslim nation has not been expressly recognized. (Hear, hear!)

Any attempt to solve the problem of India by the process of evading the real issues and by over-emphasizing the territorial entity of the provinces, which are mere accidents of British

policy, and administrative division is fundamentally wrong (Hear, hear!). Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the right of national self-determination is unequivocally recognized. (Hear, hear!)

It must be realized that India was never a country or a nation. India's problem is international in this subcontinent and differences—cultural, social, political and economic—are so fundamental that they cannot be covered up, concealed or confused, but must be handled by all as realists.

The alleged power of the minority in the matter of secession suggested in the document is illusory, as Hindu India will dominate the decision in favour of one All India Union in all the provinces, and the Muslims in Bengal and the Punjab will be at the mercy of the Hindu minority in those provinces, who will exert themselves to the fullest extent and length for keeping the Musalmans tied to the chariot wheel of Hindudom. Thus the Musalmans will be doomed to subjection in all the provinces.

We cannot barter away, with our consent, the future for the present, while fully realizing the danger of foreign aggression, and notwithstanding all our anxieties to defend India and to help the prosecution of war. To do so will be a crime on our part to posterity and generations of hundreds of millions of Muslims to come.

As regards the proposals relating to the immediate adjustments in the Central and Provincial Governments, which we are told must be considered within the framework of the existing Constitution, it is difficult to gather from the document anything definite and concrete; for it must necessarily depend upon the full picture when it is disclosed. It is not known to us, nor is it before us yet. The document is a bare skeleton of the proposals, and obviously requires a lot of filling in and adjusting before it can be made acceptable; and it is one of those cases where the details will become more vital than the bare statement of certain principles.

It has roused our deepest anxieties and grave apprehensions, especially with reference to the Pakistan scheme, which is a matter of life and death for Muslim India. We will, therefore, endeavour that the principle of Pakistan—which finds only veiled recognition in the document—should be conceded in unequivocal terms, so that we know how the right of Musalmans to keep out or accede thereto is defined to our satisfaction. We do not wish to see that the history of Palestine should be repeated as it was after the last war, after we have paid for the promises in blood, money and material.

The document shows that Pakistan is treated as a remote possibility, and there is a definite preference for a new Indian Union, which is the main objective and suggestion; and the rules of procedure and the process indicated in the document, and the interviews and explanations of Sir Stafford Cripps so far, are against us, and we are called upon to play the game with loaded dice.

Our Working Committee is engaged, as you know, since March 27 in the task of a most careful and searching examination of these proposals. I trust that in order to give real effect to the principles of Pakistan and Muslim self-determination, His Majesty's Government and Sir Stafford Cripps will not hesitate to make the necessary adjustments on their behalf. Let us hope that there will emerge out of these negotiations a settlement that will be just, honourable and finally acceptable to all. (Loud applause.)



189. 'C.R. Answers American Press': C. Rajagopalachari's Statement to the American Press on the Proposals, 4 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 5 April 1942.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari in the course of a statement to the American press says:—America, as we have the news here, is surprised that the Cripps proposal has not met with Enthusiastic response in India. The answer is that devolution plus reservation of defence cannot save India and the people of India see this.

The belated—far too belated—declaration that India may determine her own constitution on the cessation of hostilities has failed to evoke enthusiasm because of Britain's understandable refusal even at this late hour to install a truly National Government inviting it to take up the responsibility of the defence of the country.

In these days of darkness and uncertainty the present is the only reality and schemes for the future have little value for people who have seen and wept over what has happened in Malaya.

At the present moment, defence is practically the whole Government and if, as repeatedly declared by Sir Stafford Cripps so far, defence is to be strictly 'reserved' in the nasty phraseology of Indian constitutional reforms, the leaders of the people feel that they cannot hope to overcome the popular attitude of apathy if not hostility towards the British. The leaders of people should be enabled honestly to shout to the masses that the war is a people's war and the Government is the people's Government.

No one desires to run counter to or sabotage the larger policies and strategies of the British Cabinet. India will be content in that respect with advising at the War Cabinet. But within India the new Government to be set up at once should be related to defence measures and policies at least as Mr. Curtin is related to the same in Australia. I say at least, because I want more. Without more the people in India who are not related cannot be roused to battle fervour unless there is something more than an apology and explanation.

The present official Government of India is competent and experienced in the art of defending India against her own people, but not in defending India against Japan.

190. 'Hindu Mahasabha's Disappointment': Statement by N.C. Chatterjee and V.D. Savarkar on the Proposals, Defending the Stand Taken by Hindu Mahasabha, 5 April 1942

The Times of India, 7 April 1942.

'Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and myself are returning empty handed to Bengal from New Delhi,' says Mr. N.C. Chatterjee, Working President of the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha in a statement. He adds: 'We are disappointed but thank God, we did not betray the cause of Bengal. We refused to be a party to the scheme of establishing Pakistan in Bengal. There was a ray of hope when Sir Stafford Cripps said that geographical contiguity was essential for a rival federation. Later on, he whittled it down, and the Mahasabha and the Sikhs had no alternative but to reject the scheme.'

'We did not act in a huff but we took our decision after the most anxious consideration of the entire scheme. We are glad the Hindu India is with us. The promise of post-war dominion sovereignty was tempting. But the authors of the scheme failed to appreciate the intensity of

Indian nationalists' loyalty to India as a whole. To vivisect India would destroy the work of all the British Statesmen in India from Hastings to Halifax.'

Mr. V.D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, in a telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps, says: 'If you depend on any Congress-League pact alone, to which the Hindu Mahasabha is not made a willing party, then you will be leaning on a broken reed. Such a pact can only alienate the largest part of the Hindus, who otherwise would have welcomed the scheme if the vivisection of India clause was omitted.'

191. General Archibald Wavell's Letter to Sir Stafford Cripps with
Marginal Comments by Lord Linlithgow Related to Cripps's Draft
Reply to Maulana Azad, 5 April 1942
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 141, NMML.

Wavell has shown me his letter to you of today regarding your draft reply to Azad.

The presentation of this whole matter to parties involves wider considerations which I feel bound to bring to your notice as they may gravely affect my future responsibilities.

The whole trend of references to a Cabinet Government involves so radical a modification of the plan as presented that it should I suggest be presented to all parties concerned in this same manner as the original declaration was presented. It will I think then transpire that their Muslim League will not acquiesce in a Government whose advice the Governor-General would be bound to accept unless they have either a majority in it or a substantial proportion of Muslim League membership, reinforced by the maintenance of parliamentary control in the interim period. All parties are vitally interested to see that their opponent shall not be able to use the interim arrangements to improve their political position for the post-war struggle.

The draft casually concedes all question of the retention of experienced advisers in the Council. This is irrelevant to the Defence issue and I have never agreed to a promise of removing all 'official' members as a condition precedent to the acceptance of the declaration. The practical difficulties have not been considered and I regard as essential that this matter should be reserved for me to discuss if and when we reach the stage of formation of a Government.

The draft also concedes gratuitously the exclusion of any non-official European from the expanded executive Council.

I must repeat my objections to offering specified portfolios in the Executive Council as an inducement to acceptance of the declaration and I regard it as unwise to give up valuable ground unnecessarily without the least assurance that this concession will produce the desired result. All experience shows that the Congress objective is exclusive Congress control of India, and they will never co-operate until that objective is reached. Their tactics are always the same. At each stage they take all the ground they can get and then decline even to call a truce. They consolidate the position gained and it is from that line that the next attack will begin. Having reached that line without giving anything in return they then send out their patrols and reconnaissance parties to prepare the way for a new attack. But they never make peace or co-operate.

While I agree therefore that the Defence position should be clarified—and the Commander-in-Chief and I have stated clearly what kind of clarification we can agree to—it seems to me

both useless and dangerous to let these discussions drag on without the clearest assurance from the Congress that if satisfied on the point of Defence they will give up their other objections.

192. Resolution of the Working Committee of the All India Depressed Classes League, 1 April 1942

Why Cripps Failed, pp. 95-7.

In the existing circumstances, when a catastrophe of unparalleled magnitude is threatening the world, it is urgent and imperative that conditions necessary for India's wholehearted participation in her defence should be created forthwith. This is possible only if her defence policy is determined and her defence arrangements are made on the responsibility of her own Defence Member enjoying the full confidence of his countrymen. As such the defence of India must be put in Indian hands.

The Indian aspiration has been the complete independence of the country and nothing short of it will satisfy the progressive elements in the country. Independence of any country is all the more necessary for the poor and submerged population of the country. And as the depressed classes constitute the majority of such population, the League demands an immediate declaration of India's complete independence by the British Government.

While it is apparently gratifying to note that the proposal concedes the right of the country to frame her constitution through the constitution-making body, there is a very subtle move to impair the integrity of the country for all times. The right of accession of any province to the Indian union envisages an India divided in herself and her people constantly fighting among themselves. This device will only act as a stimulus for communal and sectional animosities and will prove detrimental to the progress of the poor people. The League, therefore, declares that nothing short of one single Indian union for all India can be accepted as India is an indivisible whole.

The League has always held that to make distinction between British India and Indian India in any constitutional scheme for India is a pernicious policy. The people of the States should be given the same right and opportunity of sending their representatives to the Constituent Assembly elected by popular votes as the people of the provinces.

As the depressed classes, religiously and culturally, have been one with the Hindu society, any effort to drive a wedge between the so-called caste Hindus and the depressed classes will prove injurious to both of them. The estrangement of feeling consequent upon separate electorates will give cause for constant strife between these two sections of the Hindus which may ultimately lead to the disruption and destruction of the weaker section. Therefore, the League strongly condemns the move of those persons who want to encourage the separatist mentality among a section of the depressed classes and declares that it will resist all such designs. The League holds that so long as the depressed classes are backward socially, economically, politically and educationally they require special provisions for safeguarding their rights and interests. But these special provisions should last so long as the depressed classes do not come to the same level with the so-called caste Hindus.



193. 'Pandering to Communal Intolerance': All India Nationalist League's Criticism of the Proposals, 6 April 1942

The Tribune, 7 April 1942.

The Working Committee of the All India Nationalist League, after a discussion on Cripps Proposals lasting 8 hours, adopted a memorandum to be presented to Sir Stafford Cripps. The Committee welcomed the unequivocal declaration made regarding the future status of India as it embodies all the essentials of free and independent country with the option of remaining a member and an equal partner with the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

'The Committee, however, strongly object to the description of the future Indian State as a new Indian Union. India is not a Union but a single territorial unit with a uniform historical and cultural background. In framing a future constitution of India that fact of national unity should be the only basis. That unity is a reality to start with and not an aspiration to be achieved hereafter, if possible.

Dealing with the right of provinces to join the Indian Union, the Committee say that the various provinces are assumed to be natural, territorial units entitles to the right of self-determination but India as a whole is denied such right in advance and as a matter of fact the British War Cabinet is trying to impose on the country its own views on the question of Indian unity. Indian disunity is the starting point in this proviso when quite contrary is the fact.'

A Travesty

India, as a whole, is not allowed to self-determine, but it is left to the administrative provinces to decide whether they are part and parcel of India or not and they are openly encouraged to believe that they have only to say 'no' and they will be free to remain outside the Indian Union. This is travesty of Indian self-determination and has given rise of profound misgiving in the minds of the Indian nationalists regarding the 'bona fides' of the British War Cabinet in making such an offer to this country.

The vaunted principle of self-determination is, therefore, a perfect make-believe and the Scheme stands out as an ill-conceived attempt to pander to communal and religious intolerance at the expense of the unity of India.

The Committee declare that the new proposals are the same for all practical purposes as the declaration of August 1940. Their camouflaging under the mask of self-determination is so transparent that no nationalist will be taken in. They give a wholly false impression of being based on the principle of self-determination and virtually concede the fantastic doctrine of 'Pakistan', which under no circumstance will this country be prepared to tolerate.

The Committee emphasise the one glaring omission, i.e., the failure to provide for the people of the Indian States, in the scheme of self-government and assert that it has the dubious merit of turning administrative divisions in India into independent provinces on the one hand, and planning down on the other 120 minor States' people for all time into a position not far removed from semi slavery.

The All India Nationalist League regrets that the Scheme as it stands to-day is unacceptable.

As for defence control, the Committee suggest that the principle of an Indian being in charge of the Defence portfolio must be accepted without reservation and as a matter of principle. It realizes that the Allied front in this war is one and united and once our national sentiment is respected by vesting the Defence portfolio in an Indian, the country would be prepared

during the currency of the war to agree that the actual control may remain in the hands of His Majesty's Government, if simultaneously a representative of the Indian Government is to sit on the Imperial War Cabinet as a full member.

194. The Resolution of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim Conference, Rejecting the Proposals, 8 April 1942

IAR, 1942, Vol. I, pp. 255–6.

The Working Committee firmly believes that the solidarity, integrity and unity of India is vitality essential for the common good of the Indian people and especially in the best interests of the Muslims of India. The Committee cannot, however, lose sight of the fact that a section of the Muslims is against the introduction of a single unitary system of Government in this country, apprehending such a system to be detrimental to the interests of the Muslims residing in the Muslim majority provinces. But the Committee, being conscious of the fact that the fear and apprehensions of such Muslims are the outcome of the mutual distrust and suspicion of the communities inhabiting this country, has full belief that such communal dissensions and animosities as exist at present will completely disappear with the establishment of full self-rule in India.

Further, in the opinion of the Committee the proposal relating to the option given to the provinces to keep out of the proposed Indian Union has been ingeniously devised, demonstrably in the interest of Britain rather than that of the Muslims, inasmuch as its practical effect would inevitably be to create several 'Ulsters' within India to the advantage of Britain rather than satisfactorily solving the thorny problem of the protection of the Muslim minorities in the Hindu majority provinces.

The Working Committee, being of the opinion that the constitution-making body as envisaged by the proposals would reflect the opinion of only 10 per cent of the inhabitants of India and can, therefore, hardly be called a democratic body, is very keen that such constitution-making body be framed in a way so as to represent the largest possible number of the populace, because no constitution would be acceptable to the masses unless they be fully represented in such a body.

In view of the British refusal to hand over the control of India's defence to the Indians, it becomes evidently clear that the proposals have been made not so much with the intention of parting with power and satisfying in the Indian demand for complete independence and freedom as with the object of securing the active co-operation of India for fighting out successfully the enemy now threatening the shores of India by fully mobilizing the moral and material resources of the country, which, however, in the opinion of the Committee, cannot be achieved unless the masses are made to understand and feel that this war is being fought in the interest of India and that it is their own war.

The Committee regards the manner in which the Rulers of Indian States have been given right to nominate representatives to the constitution-making body as utterly undemocratic and thinks that it will take away all the more the none-too-wide democratic character of that body as a result of which one-third the people of India would be deprived of their right to send in representatives of their own choice into the body which would decide their fate.

In view of the above, the Working Committee considers the said proposals as absolutely unsatisfactory and miserably falling short of the expectations and aspirations of the Muslim

masses and regards them as quite unacceptable unless they be modified in the manner suggested below:

- (1) That no province be allowed to keep out of the Indian Union unless the scheme of one single Indian Union were given a fair trial for full ten years;
- (2) That instead of allowing the existing Lower Houses of the provinces to nominate representatives to the constitution-making body, provision be made to constitute that body by electing its members by means of adult franchise;
- (3) That the control of the defence of India be forthwith transferred entirely into Indian hands; and
- (4) That the peoples of the Indian States be given the right to elect representatives to the constitution-making body.

195. Letter from T.B. Saprú to Shiva Rao, Expressing Despair at the War Situation and the Breakdown of the Talks, 8 April 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, R-211, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

My dear Shiva Rao

So Coconada and Vizagapattam have been raided and Madras is fearing a raid every hour. I do not know what we are in for. From this morning's papers I find that the position as between the Congress and Sir Stafford Cripps is absolutely hopeless. I believe Cripps has not been able to get the consent of His Majesty's Government even to the limited transfer of Defence suggested by some of us. I also think that the Congress has been insisting on complete and unqualified transfer of Defence including strategy. It is most unfortunate that both the parties should have dug their toes in. In the larger interest of the country there was need for accommodation on both sides. American opinion will hold the Congress responsible. Neither America nor Russia nor China are in a position to appreciate the Indian point of view. On the other hand I feel that without the appointment of a Defence Member, howsoever limited his function might be, the change at the Centre cannot produce the desired effect on public mind. I am afraid very soon the internal situation may become a cause of serious anxiety and we may be face to face with a very grave situation in relation to Japan also. God only help us! I am in a state of despair. I hope you will write to me soon and tell me what has transpired there since I left....

196. Letter from T.B. Saprú to Shiva Rao, Enquiring about the Johnson Formula and Commenting on C. Rajagopalachari and M.A. Jinnah, 9 April 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, R. 212, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

My dear Shiva Rao,

... The newspapers have been saying since yesterday evening that Col. Louis Johnson of America has presented a formula to the Congress Working Committee and also to Sir Stafford Cripps and that there is every likelihood of its being accepted by the parties with the result that a national government may be established at an early date. I should be glad if such a formula was accepted to all. Perhaps you will kindly let me know in detail what has happened. I did not

care much for Jawaharlal's effusion on the Indian States. While no doubt his attitude towards Japan is perfectly sound I fear that this is not the time when he or the Congress can afford to alienate Indian States.

The air raids on Coconada and Vizagapattam must have caused great concern to Mr. Rajagopalachari and I expect he must be getting impatient to return to Madras. It was a great pleasure to me to have met him so many times at Delhi and I have tremendous admiration for his approach to these questions and for his fairness and clarity of thinking.

Here Jinnah said to his followers that he had not accepted the scheme of Sir Stafford Cripps though the latter told me definitely at Delhi that the Muslim League had privately decided to accept the scheme and that Jinnah had informed him of it though he was manoeuvring for position and waiting to see what the Congress decided.

I have been getting some excited (you might say, abusive) letters from some Hindus in the Punjab, who seem to think that we have betrayed the cause of the Hindus. I fear men like Bhai Parmanand and others will create great trouble in the way of the Congress and those others who may accept office. If the formula is accepted I suppose the natural consequence of it will be that the present members of the Government will have to go and others will come in their place. I should be sorry if the formation of the new Government was delayed. I warn you that even at that time Jinnah may create trouble. I made a suggestion to Mr. Rajagopalachari that if a national government was going to be formed it would be a disaster if the Congress nominated any but absolutely first class men—men who were disinterested and who would not commit the same mistakes over again which their representatives did in certain provinces. I should be glad indeed if Mr. Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal and men of that class went into the Government. Small men may create great difficulties by their narrowness and by their desire to place the party above the country. I hope you will kindly let him know this thing.

Next I think honour and self-respect would require that we should then play the game and stand by the British and other united nations in the hour of peril.

197. 'Compromise on Defence Formula Likely: Hopes of Final Settlement'—News Item Expressing a Glimmer of Hope That the Johnson Formula May Be Accepted, 9 April 1942

The Times of India, 10 April 1942.

It can now be revealed that the new factor which gave a turn for the better to the political parleys yesterday was a formula relating to defence which Colonel Johnson placed before the Congress leaders.

The Congress Working Committee considered this formula yesterday for seven hours and proposed, instead, its own formula, which was communicated yesterday evening to Sir Stafford Cripps through Col. Johnson.

This morning, the Congress formula, as amended by Sir Stafford Cripps, was handed over by Col. Johnson to Pandit Nehru, who visited the U.S. envoy's residence for the purpose.

The Congress Working Committee, at its session today, examined the changes which Sir Stafford Cripps has suggested in the paragraph relating to the broad principles and to the schedule prepared by the Committee defining the respective spheres of the Commander-in-Chief and the Defence Minister.

The main controversy thus centres on the division of responsibility between the Commander-in-Chief and the political machinery of Government. While it is conceded that the Commander-in-Chief must have unfettered powers to direct operations according to the grand strategy of the United Nations, it is argued that democracy can fight the war only if it trusts the common man with weapons and that it is for the political leaders to raise a militia or national guards and provide them with the necessary arms. How these two viewpoints are to be reconciled and separate schedules of the subjects falling under the purview of the Commander-in-Chief and of the Defence Minister are to be arranged is the task which is now being handled.

Tackling Other problems

It is said that only after the defence problem is out of the way will the other clauses of the British proposals be tackled, namely, those relating to the right of non-accession given to the provinces, the representation of Indian States on the proposed constitution-making body and the personnel of the interim national Government.

It is said that even those Congress leaders who previously favoured the rejection of the British proposals now find it difficult to decide whether the best interests of the country would be served by accepting or rejecting the proposals. Though this attitude represents a gain for these who hope that a settlement will be reached somehow, there are still some hurdles to be got over, and progress in finding a way out of the impasse over defence is slow. The Congress Working Committee is likely, therefore, to be in session for another two days.

The Muslim League Working Committee is also busy preparing its final reply to the British proposals in the light of Mr. Jinnah's discussion with Sir Stafford Cripps and General Wavell, and the League resolution on the subject may be released by Saturday.

An Associated Press message states:

It may now be definitely stated that, so far as the Congress is concerned, there will be no difficulty or delay in the establishment of a National Government in India. A general understanding on the main points of discussion has been almost reached.

The Working Committee's statement on the final terms of the British Government declaration is expected to be published tomorrow or, at the latest, on Saturday.

The day's proceedings began with a conference between Pandit Nehru and Col. Johnson at Cochin House, which is the American envoy's headquarters, while at Birla House the Congress Working Committee was in session. Pandit Nehru joined the Working Committee after having been with Col. Johnson for over an hour.

Col. Johnson called on Sir Stafford Cripps this morning and was with him for about ten minutes.

The Congress Working Committee rose at 4.30 p.m. and will meet again tomorrow morning at 8.30.

Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru arrived at the Residence of Sir Stafford Cripps at 5.25 p.m. and were received by Sir Stafford Cripps himself, who took them in. The Congress leaders left at 8 p.m. after a conference lasting over two hours and a half.

It is learned that besides the Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, other political parties have also been informed of the new defence formula.

Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, arrived here tonight.

League Reply to Offer

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League is expected to communicate to Sir Stafford Cripps tomorrow its reply to the draft British declaration and the new formula regarding defence, the whole of which it discussed today for over seven hours.

According to the political correspondent of the *Associated Press*, the Committee asks for clarification of certain points. It expresses dissatisfaction with the proposals regarding the future, and is believed to give general support to the demand made by Mr. Jinnah at Allahabad that Pakistan should be conceded in unequivocal terms.

The Committee recalls Sir Stafford Cripps's assertion that the scheme stood or fell as a whole, and they would like it to be made clear, whether in view of their objection to the earlier part of the scheme, it is open to any part to discuss the later part relating to the immediate present. It reiterates, however, its preparedness, expressed in earlier resolutions, to associate itself with Government provided that Muslims are given a real and effective share in the power and authority of Government without prejudice to the future.

It is anticipated that Mr. Jinnah and Sir Stafford Cripps will discuss the points tomorrow.

198. 'Delhi Political Talks Fail? Congress Unwilling to Accept Cripps Plan': News Item Declaring the Final Breakdown of the Negotiations, 10 April 1942

The Times of India, 11 April 1942.

After over a fortnight of fluctuating hope and anxiety, the negotiations between the Congress and the British War Cabinet's special representative are understood to have failed to yield a settlement.

This is believed to be due mainly to difference on the transfer of defence to Indian control, on the Congress demand for a virtual end of the Secretary of State's control and on the demand that where a majority of the future Cabinet were agreed, the Viceroy should not use his power of veto.

It is gathered that the final communication sent by the Congress Working Committee to Sir Stafford Cripps is a 1,500 word letter, setting forth the arguments and considerations which have led the Committee to its decision.

The letter is reported to declare that the Congress is prepared to come in and take office if the Government at the Centre is a truly national Government with Cabinet responsibility, and not merely an extension of the Governor-General's Executive Council.

The Working Committee's session in Delhi, which is expected to conclude tomorrow, has already been one of the longest in its history.

Differences re-emerged over the question of defence and other proposals, on which it was previously thought an understanding was in sight. The members of the Working Committee feel that during the detailed discussion of the new defence formula it became clear that the powers and functions intended to be transferred were unsatisfactory.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad told Pressmen at the conclusion of the four-hour session in the afternoon: 'I placed before the Working Committee today the gist of my talks with Sir Stafford Cripps yesterday. I am sending the Committee's resolution to Sir Stafford just now, and I hope to be able to give you the main resolution of the Committee and the supplementary statement tomorrow.'

Committee of One Mind

Maulana Azad made it clear that the resolution was a unanimous one and that through all the stages of the discussion the Committee had been of one mind.

The Maulana is leaving for Allahabad *en route* to Calcutta tomorrow. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya leaves for Bezwada tomorrow evening.

A prominent member of the Congress Executive, questioned by Pressmen, said: 'The sky may be overcast, the weather may be cloudy; but do not go by the weather chart. We are meeting again tomorrow.'

Soon after the Congress resolution had been handed in to him, Sir Stafford Cripps drove out of his residence.

Sir Stafford Cripps has called a Press conference at 12 noon tomorrow, when, it is expected, he will announce the final result of his mission.

Sir Stafford Cripps will give a broadcast talk from the Delhi station of All India Radio at 8.30 p.m. tomorrow (Saturday).

Sir Stafford Cripps called on Mr. M.A. Jinnah at 7 o'clock this evening and further discussed the proposals with him. It is understood that Mr. Jinnah will place the result of this talk before the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League at 10 a.m. tomorrow and give the final reply of the Muslim League to Sir Stafford before noon tomorrow.

It is learnt that Pandit Nehru, after last evening's meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps, had a conference with Col. Johnson, Col. Johnson met Sir Stafford Cripps this morning for about 20 minutes.

Inquiries at Sir Stafford Cripps's headquarters show that no invitation asking political parties to join the National Government has been made by Sir Stafford Cripps. Sir Stafford Cripps has, however, informed the major parties of the modifications in the proposals.

Hindu Sabha to Meet

An emergency meeting of the All India Hindu Mahasabha will be held at Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan, New Delhi, on April 14, to consider the present political situation. Mr. V.D. Savarkar, the President of the Mahasabha, is expected to leave for Delhi on Sunday.

Washington: President Roosevelt, at a press conference on Friday, declined to comment on the situation in India; saying he had received no report from Colonel Johnson since the one received early yesterday morning, which was along the lines of reports published in the press.

Crisis in Political Parleys

'Futile to Continue'

Our Special Correspondent, wiring earlier, said:

The political parleys have again reached a crisis, and Colonel Johnson, learning of the unsatisfactory outcomes of the two-and-a-half-hour talks which Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru had had yesterday evening with Sir Stafford Cripps, met Sir Stafford again this morning to see if a fresh approach could be made.

The Congress Working Committee sat this morning for two hours and Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru reported the result of their interview with Sir Stafford Cripps and stated that though some advance had been made in narrowing down the points of difficulty, they had failed to reach a settlement on broad principles over defence. They also explained Sir Stafford Cripps's reaction to the Congress view on other clauses of the British proposals.

I gather that the Committee decided that it was fruitless to continue further negotiations and that the Committee should draft this afternoon their final replay and forward it to Sir Stafford Cripps.

The Gandhian school of thought in the Working Committee was, for the first time since the negotiations started, in a happy mood, in that the advice which Mr. Gandhi tendered to the committee had a prospect now of being accepted. Mr. Gandhi told the Committee that the proposals lacked sincerity and trust and that, therefore, they did not form a solid basis for negotiations. It appears that the section of the Committee members who wished the negotiations to succeed on a basis of give and take is again in the minority and that majority opinion has once again been swayed against a settlement because of the feeling that Sir Stafford Cripps is not having a free hand in the negotiations.

Muslim League opinion too has crystallized. While the League demands an unequivocal declaration in favour of the principle of Pakistan it is prepared to set aside this controversial Government provided an effective share is given to the League in such Government and provided defence is included in the sphere or responsibility of such Government.

199. Letter from Maharaja Jam Saheb of Nawanagar to Sir Stafford Cripps, Enclosing the Resolution of Indian States' Delegation, Accepting and Welcoming the Proposals, 10 April 1942
TOP, Vol. I, pp. 734–5.

My dear Sir Stafford,

The Indian States' Delegation unanimously adopted the following resolution in respect of the proposals of His Majesty's Government which you discussed with them:

'The attitude of the Indian States in general on the mission of the Lord Privy Seal is summed up in the resolution on the subject which was adopted unanimously at the recent session of the Chamber of Princes. The Indian States will be glad as always, in the interest of their Motherland, to make their contribution, in every reasonable manner compatible with the sovereignty and integrity of the States, towards the framing of a new Constitution for India.

The States should be assured, however, that in the event of a number of States not finding it feasible to adhere, the non-adhering States or groups of States, so desiring, would have the right to form a Union of their own with full sovereign status in accordance with a suitable and agreed procedure devised for the purpose.'

Yours sincerely

Digvijaysinhji

Maharaja Jam Saheb of Nawanagar,
Chancellor, Chamber of Princes

Enclosure

Resolution

'(a) that this Chamber welcomes the Announcement made in the House of Commons on the 11th March, 1942, by the Prime Minister and the forthcoming visit to India of the Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons, and expresses the hope that it may help to unite

India to intensify further her war effort and to strengthen measures for the defence of the Motherland.

(b) that this Chamber has repeatedly made it clear that any scheme to be acceptable to the States must effectively protect their rights arising from Treaties, Engagements and Sanads or otherwise and ensure the future existence, sovereignty and autonomy of the States there under guaranteed, and leave them complete freedom duly to discharge their obligations to the Crown and to their subjects; it therefore notes with particular satisfaction the reference in the Announcement of the Prime Minister to the fulfillment of the Treaty obligations to the Indian States.

(c) that this Chamber authorises its representatives to carry on discussions and negotiations for the constitutional advance of India with due regard to the successful prosecution of war and the interests of States, and subject to final confirmation by the Chamber and without prejudice to the right of individual States to be consulted in respect of any proposals affecting their Treaty or other inherent rights.'

200. Letter from Shiva Rao to T.B. Saprú on Developments in the
Negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps and Jawaharlal Nehru,
11 April 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. R-215, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

There has been a most unexpected development in the Cripps negotiations. On Thursday evening everything seemed to be going well and there were suggestions of a National Government. But late in the evening Jawaharlal and Azad had two and a half hours with Cripps. The full details of the conversation are, of course, not available. But I gather that on the question of defence, while the Congress was agreeable to a demarcation of functions between the Defence Member and the Commander-in-Chief, the actual lists proposed were not quite satisfactory. There are two versions regarding this matter. One is that the differences were not serious; the other is that Jawaharlal was not satisfied with the proposals. In any event the actual breakdown seems to have come over a certain assurance which the Congress wanted from the Viceroy that apart from questions of defence he would, in regard to the rest of the field of administration conduct himself like a Constitutional governor-General and abide by the decisions of the Cabinet. Personally I see no reason why they should have asked for that assurance, because in any case the Act itself lays down that the Governor-General shall be bound by a majority decision unless the adoption of such a course would affect the peace and tranquility of India. By far the wiser course would have been to go into office and if the Viceroy did act arbitrarily and abuse his authority, to have resigned and protested. However, our Congress friends have a genius for creating crises out of anything. Cripps is disheartened and will probably leave tomorrow or the day after ...

201. Resolution of the Working Committee of the All India Muslim
League Rejecting the Proposals, 11 April 1942

IAR, 1942, Vol. I, pp. 251-3.

The following is the text of the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League on the Cripps proposals. The resolution was released to the press on April 11.

The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League have given their most earnest and careful consideration to the announcement made by Mr. Churchill, the British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons on March 11, 1942, and the Draft Declaration of the War Cabinet of His Majesty's Government regarding the future of India and also the interim proposals, during the critical period which now faces India, for the immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country.

The Committee appreciate that the British Prime Minister, in his pronouncement, made it clear that the Draft Declaration embodied only the proposals of His Majesty's Government and not their decision, and that they are subject to agreement between the main elements in India, thus maintaining the validity of the Declaration of August 8, 1940, which had promised to the Mussalmans that neither the machinery for the framing of the constitution should be set up nor the constitution itself should be enforced without the approval and consent of Muslim India.

The Committee, while expressing their gratification that the possibility of Pakistan is recognized by implication by providing for the establishment of two or more independent Unions in India, regret that the proposals of His Majesty's Government, embodying the fundamentals, are not open to any modification and, therefore, no alternative proposals are invited. In view of the rigidity of the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to the fundamentals not being open to any modification, the Committee have no alternative but to say that the proposals in their present form are unacceptable to them for reasons given below.

- (1) The Mussalmans, after twenty-five years of genuine efforts for the reconciliation of the two major communities and the bitter experience of the failure of such efforts, are convinced that it is neither just nor possible, in the interest of peace and happiness of the two peoples, to compel them to constitute one Indian Union, composed of the two principal nations—Hindus and Muslims—which appears to be the main object of His Majesty's Government, as adumbrated in the Preamble of the Draft Declaration, the creation of more than one union being relegated only to the realm of remote possibility and is purely illusory.
- (2) In the Draft Declaration a constitution-making body has been proposed with the Primary object of creating one Indian union. So far as the Muslim League is concerned, it has finally decided that the only solution of India's constitutional problem is the partition of India into independent zones; and it will, therefore, be unfair to the Mussalmans to compel them to enter such a constitution-making body, whose main object is the creation of a new Indian Union. With conditions as they are, it will be not only futile but on the contrary may exacerbate bitterness and animosity amongst the various elements in the country.

Besides, the machinery which has been proposed for the creation of the constitution-making body, namely, that it will consist of members elected by the newly elected Lower Houses of the eleven provinces, upon the cessation of hostilities, as a single electoral college by the system of proportional representation, is a fundamental departure from the right of the Mussalmans, hitherto enjoyed by them, to elect their representatives by means of separate electorates, which is the only sure way in which true representatives of the Mussalmans can be chosen.

The constitution-making body will take decisions by a bare majority on all questions of most vital and paramount character involved in the framing of the constitution, which is a departure from the fundamental principles of justice and contrary to constitutional

practice so far followed in the various countries and dominions; and the Mussalmans, by agreeing to this will, instead of exercising their right and judgement as a constituent factor, be at the entire mercy of the constitution-making body, in which they will be a minority of about twenty-five per cent.

- (3) The right of non-accession to the Union, as contemplated in the Draft Declaration, has been conceded, presumably, in response to the insistent demands by the Mussalmans for the partition of India, but the method and procedure laid down are such as to negative the professed object, for, in the draft proposals, the right of non-accession has been given to the existing provinces, which have been formed from time to time for administrative convenience and on no logical basis.

The Mussalmans cannot be satisfied by such a Declaration on a vital question affecting their future destiny and demand a clear and precise pronouncement on the subject. Any attempt to solve the future problem of India by the process of evading the real issues is to court disaster.

In the draft proposals no procedure has been laid down as to how the verdict of the province is to be obtained in favour of, or against, accession to one Union; but in the letter dated April 2, from the secretary of Sir Stafford Cripps, addressed to the President of the All India Muslim League, it is stated that 'a province should reach the decision whether or not to stand out of the Union by a vote in the Legislative Assembly on a resolution to stand in. If the majority for accession to the Union is less than sixty per cent, the minority will have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult population.' In this connection it must be emphasized that in the provinces where the Mussalmans are in a majority, as in the case of the major provinces of Bengal and Punjab, they are in a minority in the Legislative Assemblies and in the Assemblies of Sind and the North-West Frontier Province, the total number namely, sixty and fifty respectively, is so small and the weightage given to the non-Muslims so heavy that it can be easily manipulated and a decision under such conditions cannot be the true criterion of ascertaining the real opinion of the Mussalmans of those provinces.

As regards the suggested plebiscite in the provinces in which the Mussalmans are in a majority, in the event of the requisite majority not being available in the Legislative Assemblies, the procedure laid down is that reference shall be made to the whole adult population of the provinces and not to the Mussalmans alone, which is to deny them the inherent right to self-determination.

- (4) With regard to the treaties to be negotiated between the Crown and the Indian Union or Unions, the proposals do not indicate as to what would happen in case of disagreement in the terms between the contracting parties, nor is there any provision made as to what would be the procedure when there is a difference of opinion in negotiating a revision of treaty arrangements with the Indian States in the new situation.
- (5) With regard to the interim arrangement, there is no definite proposal except the bare statement that His Majesty's Government desire and invite the effective and immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. The Committee are, therefore, unable to express their opinion until a complete picture is available. Another reason why the Committee are unable to express their opinion of the interim arrangements for participation in the counsels of the country, is that Sir Stafford Cripps has made it clear that the scheme goes through as a whole or is

rejected as a whole and that it would not be possible to retain only the part relating to the immediate arrangements at the centre and discard the rest of the draft scheme, and as the Committee has come to the conclusion that the proposals for the future are unacceptable, it will serve no useful purpose to deal further with the question of the immediate arrangements.

In conclusion the Committee wish to point out that the position of the Muslim League has been and is that unless the principle of Pakistan scheme, as embodied in the Lahore Resolution dated March, 1940, which is now the creed of the All India Muslim League, namely,

‘The establishment of completely independent States formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Mussalmans are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and eastern zones of India, shall be grouped together to constitute independent States as Muslim free national homelands in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign;

‘That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the above mentioned units and regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them;

‘That in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.’

Is unequivocally accepted and the right of the Mussalmans of self-determination is conceded by means of a machinery which will reflect the true verdict of Muslim India, it is not possible for the Muslim League to accept any proposal or scheme regarding the future.

202. Letter by L.S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow, with Comments at the Margins by Linlithgow, Doing a Post-mortem of Cripps Mission, 11 April 1942

TOP, Vol. I, pp. 756–8

What a time you have had of it! And what a relief now that it is over! It is clear from the telegrams that bearings between you and Cripps must have been getting pretty heated during the last few days, and indeed they were getting pretty heated between him and the Cabinet. It does seem to me that the longer he stayed out there, the more his keenness on a settlement drew him away from the original plan on which we had all agreed, and in the direction of something to which we were all opposed. Our whole conception was to put an end to all doubts about our complete sincerity as to the future and to hope that in the light of that Indians would co-operate within the present constitutional scheme. What we were quite clearly opposed to was anything in the nature of a Sapru National Government responsible to no one. Yet at the last moment, when it came to suggesting that the new ‘National Government’

Some day when I have handed over charge, I will give L.S.A. my views. Till then—least said soonest mended!

L.

should work under some sort of convention, Cripps was getting very near giving the whole case away, and you will have seen how strongly we reacted to that in the telegram which I drafted in the course of yesterday afternoon's Cabinet meeting. What puzzles me a little is that Cripps should have been prepared to go that far with Congress without realizing that this was the very thing against which Jinnah said the Muslims would rise in revolt.

What I must say we have felt here rather strongly is that neither Cripps nor yourself has given us any clear indication of how far you were either prepared to go between you, or how far Cripps went in his talks with Indian leaders, in the direction of reconstituting your Executive. It was only through a casual reference in Cripps' letter to Azad that we realized that the Home Affairs Department—surely the most dangerous in many ways as well as the most contentious between the communities—had been offered. We have no idea whether Finance was offered as well, or whether the European official members were to have been kept in their original or in other posts. That, too undoubtedly frightened Winston and the Cabinet, for our idea when Cripps left was certainly not that of a completely clean sweep of the existing Executive, except for the Commander-in-Chief, but only of a substantial reconstitution which might possibly include Finance as well as part of Defence, but still leave you with some of your old Advisers, as well as with a balancing element, neither Hindu nor Muslim, which would get over Jinnah's otherwise not unreasonable demand for half the seats.

Well, all that is now back history, though it will still be interesting to know how far you yourself have been prepared to go and what was actually offered. I don't suppose Jinnah will want to seem less nationalist than Congress and therefore to come in under the existing constitution. If he does, I suppose you could give him certain seats, balancing his men with Ambedkar and possibly a new Hindu or two, but still retaining the majority of your existing Executive? Or you may simply decide to drop all idea of bringing in political leaders from either of the two main parties and fill up on the lines you were contemplating before all this emerged?

So far as the effect outside India is concerned it seems to me likely to be all to the good. For the first time America will have learnt something about the complexities of Indian affairs and of the intransigence of Congress politicians and their underlying refusal to face responsibility. Here at home we ought to have a public opinion united in the main, though I imagine that a certain element of the extreme left will begin before another six months are out clamouring for us to do something new and not preserve the die-hard attitude shown by Cripps! When it comes to India, I confess I find it very difficult to form any sort of idea of what will be the outcome. You have escaped being saddled with a probably quite unworkable team. Will your present team have been so badly shaken by the uncertainties of the last three weeks as to be weaker, or will they now feel themselves firmly in the saddle and prepared to take responsibilities which may become very

How could I help when I was consulted by Cripps about nothing?
L.

through a casual reference in Cripps'

1. *Done without consultation and protested against by me the moment C. told me he had done it.*
2. *Chucked away despite my strong protest.*
L.

Cripps told me that Cabinet had given him permission to go the length of 100 per cent Indianization, if necessary.
L.

I think S./S. knows J.'s terms.
L.

I'm glad we've got something.
L.

We will see what a little tonic will do.
L.

grave before long? From the point view of Indian politics generally I should have thought that it was a substantial gain to have brought home to all parties, and to Congress above all, that a united India can only be preserved by agreement and compromise and not by agitating against the British Government. On the other hand, there is, of course, the danger that instead of facing the need for compromise, the different factions, Hindu and Muslim, Muslim and Sikh, may be even more antagonistic to each other and organize against each other, possibly to the serious detriment of recruiting. Then there is the actual attitude of the parties towards the war. Will Congress drift into a position of definite antagonism, with a fifth columnist outer wing, in which case we shall have to be absolutely firm in locking them all up, or will they be at heart a little ashamed of themselves and give a certain measure of co-operation?

My fear is that Nehru and Raja-gopalacharia will shout 'forward' while the back rows do the 5th column stuff!

L.

The Muslim League, I suppose, will still be officially non-co-operative, but probably more co-operative than hitherto in practice in view of the definite concession to the possibility of Pakistan that we have made?

203. Jawaharlal Nehru's Long Interview to the Press on Cripps Mission, 12 April 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 213-27.

Q.: Why did the Congress take a fortnight to reject the Cripps proposals? To what extent were you ready for participating in the war effort? Was it only a question of the powers of the Commander-in-Chief or was your conception of defence different from that of Cripps? Is it not true as Sir Stafford Cripps said in his broadcast yesterday that 'parties and individuals vied with one another in a competition to discover the greatest number of defects', and as a result they forgot the vital part of the document—'full and free self-government for India'?

Nehru (hereafter JN): It is true that we took a fortnight or more in these discussions. That surely indicates our extreme desire not to break but to come to some kind of settlement, which is honourable.

Today the dominant factor is the imminent peril to India and I want you to appreciate what I say. We agreed to things which during the last twenty-two years we would never have dreamt of agreeing to or even coming near to them. In these twenty-two years we have stood for some objective. Not only the Congress but vast numbers of people outside the formal folds of the Congress, and all the communal organisations, have demanded independence.

For the first time in these twenty-two years, I swallowed many a bitter pill when I said I was prepared to agree to many things so as somehow to come to an agreement. At no time it was suggested by the Congress that the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief for carrying on the war in an effective way should be interfered with. But in addition to his powers as Commander-in-Chief, he is at present having other powers which are really those of a Defence Minister. The removal of Defence from the responsibilities of the new government made the position of the Defence Minister absurd and ridiculous.

I did want to throw all my sympathy and all the energy I possess into the organisation of the defence of India. According to my conception of the defence of India, I wanted hundreds of millions of Indians in the army. It was not a conception of just an army functioning, but of every man and woman doing something for the war, of making it a 'popular war' and of our

carrying on defence even if trained armies in the field failed. The military way is to fight as long as you can and when you feel you have lost the battle, to surrender. The conception of popular resistance is no surrender, whether the soldiers die or live. That is the conception that China has given us, and the same conception is largely seen in Russia. And that is the conception we want in India. Our conception was one of developing a citizen army or militia. To the last moment it was not clear whether, even if we agreed to join the government, we could develop a citizen army. What we were ultimately told was that the matter would lie within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief and that he would not come in the way, that is, in certain circumstances the Commander-in-Chief would agree. If he did not agree, we had always the option to resign, we were told. That is not the way to bring about any arrangement or settlement.

Our whole approach was one of lighting a spark in the minds of the hundreds of millions of Indians. It was not an easy responsibility for anyone to undertake. Nevertheless we felt that circumstances demanded it and whatever our grievances with the British Government, whatever the past history of our relations, we could not allow that to come in the way of what we considered our duty to our country at present. The only thing that troubled us all the time was: Can we discharge that duty well? Can we make India hum as an organised unit of resistance making the people feel that this is their war? And for Sir Stafford to say that we are bargaining and using the language of the market-place or of a petty fogging lawyer, shows that Sir Stafford, I regret to say, considers, as most British statesmen consider, the whole question from the standpoint that they alone are right and those who are against them are not only in the wrong but damnably wrong—a standpoint which in this wide world is peculiar only to England and which is an indication of a singularly complaisant attitude.

Q: If, as you say, you were not bargaining with Cripps, then why did it take so long to reject the proposals?

JN: But for our great desire to reach a settlement, the talks would have broken down at an earlier stage.

At first, a certain formula was given by Sir Stafford according to which the Commander-in-Chief was to be the War Minister, and the Defence Minister was to be entrusted with certain functions. Attached to the formula was a list—practically exhaustive—of the functions to be entrusted to the Defence Minister. They were—propaganda, canteens, petroleum, amenities, stationery and subjects of that kind. These subjects were such that they would have made the Defence Minister's position ridiculous in the eyes of the public. Therefore it was not accepted by the Congress Working Committee. Then came a new formula at the instance of a third party, but presumably with Sir Stafford's approval, with no list of subjects attached. In the Working Committee's opinion, this afforded a basis for arriving at an agreed formula for Defence, but the real important point was—what subjects will be transferred to the Defence Minister? Sir Stafford did not reply to a letter of ours asking for a list of these subjects. At no stage did we receive that list. At this point, the Working Committee decided that carrying on correspondence was taking up too much time and that the time had come when the matter should be settled by a personal interview. It was at that stage that Maulana Azad and myself had our last interview with Sir Stafford Cripps. If you had asked me before that interview what exactly the position was, it would have been difficult for me to answer, but I would have said there was seventy-five per cent chance of an agreement coming.

In that interview we discussed the last Defence formula and other matters. And were really astonished that all the premises and assumptions, which we had in our mind for ten days

and which we had been arguing, had no foundation at all. When we pressed Sir Stafford to give a list of subjects, he referred us to the Army Manual. He went into a long disquisition as to how the Indian Army became what it was today. He made it clear this was not an Indian Army at all but an outgrowth and an offshoot of the British Army, entirely controlled by the Imperial Staff in England, whose agent was the Commander-in-Chief. I tried to point out to him that whatever their present conception, it was quite essential, so far as the Indian Army was concerned, that it must be looked upon by the Indian people as a National Army. Sir Stafford's attitude was, however, rigid, and in the end he said that a list of subjects was already given with his original formula.

Sir Stafford even refused to follow the Australian model saying that Mr. Curtin in Australia had greater powers than Mr. Churchill in England. As regards the citizen army, Sir Stafford said that the matter would be within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, and he hoped the Commander-in-Chief would probably agree. If he did not agree, it was open to the Minister to resign. As I said before, this was not the way to bring about a settlement.

That is not the way to fight a war—the lackadaisical way of the Viceroy's House and the Government of India. If there is a National Government, everybody will have to work or get out. It is not an evening dress war. It is work, work, work. Those who sit to dinner in evening dress at 8.15 are not going to win this war.

Q: How would you raise a citizen army without the necessary equipment?

JN: Well, I can cite the examples of China and Spain. The former is now self-sufficient so far as small arms are concerned. In India, with a National Government, we could have doubled or trebled the production of our factories. We could have sacrificed luxuries and turned those factories producing non-essential goods into factories for small arms. The whole conception of a citizen army is a practical conception, a psychological conception, an essential conception.

Recently, a person who had become a German prisoner and had managed to escape told me and others what the Germans thought of the Indian troops, how much they had been impressed by their courage and efficiency in action. The Germans said, 'It is a magnificent army. What could we not do, if we had such people to draw upon? If they fight like this in a mercenary capacity, how much better they would fight if they thought they were fighting for their own freedom!' It is really a question of psychological approach.

Q: Was there any understanding about the formation of a National Government when the talks began?

JN: From the beginning, the impression which Sir Stafford had given was that the new Government would be a National Government. Sir Stafford had himself used the words 'National Cabinet.' He had also said that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King, in other words, a constitutional head. The language used by Sir Stafford had led us to assume that everything was being transferred except Defence and that the Viceroy would not interfere with the decision of the Cabinet though he might have special powers such as in connection with the states or some major issues. So the question of the new government's powers was not even discussed. At the last interview on Thursday night, however, the picture which Stafford gave showed that the premises and assumptions on which we had been arguing had no real foundation. Sir Stafford began to talk of the Viceroy's 'Executive Council' and not a 'National Government'. Names do make a difference. If we go round the country, talking about the Viceroy's Executive Council, what would the people think? We agreed to the legal phraseology, but contrary to our old assumptions, Sir Stafford made it perfectly clear that

there would be no essential change, legal or even by way of any conventions to begin with, between the position of the Viceroy's Council today and the position of the Viceroy's Council tomorrow when it came into existence.

Q: What do you think was the reason for the change in Sir Stafford's attitude?

JN: Sir Stafford might have used words and phrases in a sense different from ours, or he might have been pulled up by his 'Senior partners' in England. It was obvious that there had been some trouble between him and others, and not between him and us.

We went on agreeing to proposals after proposals because of the immediate pressure of events. We even conceded that it might continue to be called the Viceroy's Executive Council and not a Cabinet, but we wanted to know the conventions that must govern the Council. Sir Stafford said he was totally unable to say anything on the subject, because it lay at the discretion of the Viceroy, and that it was for us Indians to go to the Viceroy later on and discuss the matter with him. Sir Stafford was sure that the Viceroy would take a reasonable view of it.

For the present, the whole thing boils down to this, that we agree to join the Viceroy's Council practically unconditionally, except for a very vague picture of what would happen in the future. The picture he put forward to us was really the August Offer, repeated with minor changes. Then I mentioned this to him he was very hurt.

Q: Sir Stafford Cripps, in his letter to Maulana Azad, dated 10 April 1942, charged that the Congress had, for the first time, asked for big changes immediately in the constitution. What have you to say to this?

JN: The reference in Azad's letter was intended only to remove a misunderstanding. In one of his letters Sir Stafford had said that the Congress had agreed that there should be no constitutional changes in the interim period. As this was not correct, the President explained the Congress stand. The Congress had merely said that it did not want to enter into an argument now on these constitutional questions, but it made no commitment of the kind that we agreed not to ask for any immediate constitutional changes. Our position was this, 'while we are not agreeing, we are not pressing this.' It is not an issue at present; Sir Stafford was not, therefore, correct in saying that a major issue had been raised. You are all aware of the offer made by Mr. Churchill, at a critical time in the war, to France for a union with England. I only suggested that Parliament should pass a small bill of six sections giving independent status to India and agreeing to the principle of self-determination, and that other details, communal and other, could be left out for settlement later. If that had been done, the whole approach to the question would have become different—as between England and India and also between the communities. The Congress point of view was this that they were prepared to have a National Government for war purposes, but as regards the future government, they were prepared to leave for future consideration the question of detailed and precise proposals for the future government. However, the present proposals would have also to be considered from the viewpoint of the future. If the independence of India was not accepted in principle, it would have a very bad psychological effect on the people.

Q: Sir Stafford refers in his last letter of 10 April to the 'tyrannical rule of a majority' if the Congress demands had been accepted. What have you to say about this?

JN: I want to make it perfectly clear that throughout our talks and correspondence, except for the last two letters, there was no reference at all at any stage in the slightest degree to the question of a majority rule much as we disliked it. We accepted the idea of a composite Cabinet formed from different groups representing different ideologies in the country, some coming among others from the Muslim League, some from the Hindu Mahasabha and some from the

Sikhs. We accepted that, although it was a thing which would have made the functioning of the National Government very difficult. At no stage did we discuss the number of the members from the different groups. We did not discuss it because we, speaking on behalf of the Congress, never laid stress on the Congress having this or that. We wanted no power for the Congress. We always talked in terms of what the National Government would have, whoever might be there and whatever their numbers. We talked of it as a group and what power that group should have. The communal issue in any form was never discussed except that Sir Stafford Cripps often repeated one formula, that he was only concerned with agreement between three groups in India, the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League. He did not care whether others agreed or not, but if any of these three did not agree the scheme fell through.

For the first time this question was definitely emphasised by Sir Stafford Cripps in his letter dated April 10 in which he used the phrase 'tyrannical rule of the majority'. For an eminent lawyer and constitutionalist like Sir Stafford to use such a phrase in this manner is extraordinary. We were thinking in terms really not even of a legislature but of a Cabinet consisting of fifteen persons. What would be the proportions of the different groups in that Cabinet we never discussed. What was the harm even if there was the so-called Congress majority in it, though the Congress was not thinking on these lines. But Sir Stafford's mind was continually functioning, balancing the different communal groups. Suppose, then, in a Cabinet of fifteen there was a Congress majority of eight or nine. It was of no use because new Cabinets cannot function and do not function, especially in war time, on the basis of majority. There must be a certain homogeneity or common outlook; otherwise the Cabinet may break up. Sir Stafford had been continuously reminding us of the ultimate sanction of resignation. If we had that ultimate sanction, so also every group in that Cabinet had that ultimate sanction. So the talk of the tyranny of the majority is amazing and fantastic nonsense. In one of his letters, Sir Stafford, while dealing with a point, mentioned that he had seen something or the other in the 'Hindu press'. When further questioned; he said he meant *The Hindustan Times*. That in itself shows how he was continually thinking in regard to every matter in terms of Hindu and Muslim, which even Mr. Jinnah does not do.

Q: Do you think Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Savarkar would have supported the Congress proposals?

JN: I cannot conceive of Mr. Jinnah or Dr. Savarkar really disagreeing with anything that the Congress had said to Sir Stafford Cripps in regard to the proposals for the immediate present.

Q: Despite all the efforts of the Congress and yours, the talks failed. Still, do you wholeheartedly support the Congress position?

JN: It was my greatest desire to find a way out and make India function effectively for defence and make the war a popular effort. So great was my desire that some things I have stood for during the last quarter of a century, and which I could never have imagined for a moment I would give up, I now agreed to give them up. I am convinced personally that it is impossible for us to agree to the proposals as they eventually emerged from the British Government's mind. I am in complete and wholehearted agreement with the Congress resolution and the letters of the Congress President.

Q: Since the British are completely involved in this international war, is it not unreasonable for the Indian leaders not to come to some compromise with the British? After all India is not the crux of the war.

JN: Today India is the crux of the war. The only other really important theatre is the Russian theatre. These are the two important theatres of war, very little else counts for the present. Much will, of course, depend in the next two or three months on the Russo-German war, a

great deal will depend in India on what happens as between Germany and Russia. But apart from that India is going to be for the next three or four months the crux of the war. It will make a difference to the length of the war and the intensity of the war. Because of that every country in the world realises the importance of India except, of course, the big people in New Delhi and Whitehall—they are slow of understanding and comprehension—and therefore you have these frantic radio appeals from Germany and Japan.

Every party knows that India can function effectively only if the Indian people function effectively. It does not matter how hard a few brass-hats work. If today a National Government in India said, 'We are going to arm the Indian people, we may not have the best of the modern arms, aeroplanes, tanks, but we are going to arm them with such guns as we can have', think how the world situation will change, what reactions it will have in Germany and Japan and also in the Allied countries!

Q: Would the breakdown of the talks in New Delhi make a difference to the Congress attitude of non-embarrassment of the British?

JN: Naturally, the public reaction in India to the breakdown will be one of irritation against the British Government; nevertheless the issues before the country are so grave that no responsible person can talk lightly about them or just consider them in terms of bitter reactions to events. We cannot afford to be bitter because bitterness clouds the mind and affects the judgment at a moment of grave crisis.

The fundamental factor is not what the British Government does to us or what we do to it although that is very important; the fundamental factor is the peril to India and what we are going to do about it. Therefore, certainly, in spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India or the effort of our American friends, who may come here. We want production to go on full speed ahead. We want the people to hold to their jobs and not run away from them. We cannot participate in Britain's war effort, and therefore the problem before us is that without participating in that war effort and without embarrassing it, how to organise our own war effort on our own basis of a free and independent India. I hope the A.I.C.C., at its meeting in a fortnight's time, will consider this problem and tell us what to do about it.

Q: How do you think India can defend itself?

JN: Only the state can defend a country. We are not in the state. We cannot raise a citizen army. Nevertheless, since this crisis came before us, we have started an intensified programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection. It is an attempt to organise rural areas as well as urban areas as far as possible, possibly more in respect of food and cloth, because transport is failing us. We started this programme so that we could build up regional self-sufficient units, which could carry on, even though rail and motor transport failed.

Naturally these units cannot resist an invading army. But they form the background of any resistance that the state or we might organise. They can help by preventing disorder, increasing production and preventing panic from spreading, and in future, they might become the reservoir from which more efficient units of resistance might be drawn and trained. If we were in the Government, we could have immediately approached the problem in that way. But today if we make an attempt in that direction, we would meet, not with Japanese but British resistance. If the Government of India is wise enough, it should not come in our way in developing this movement. It is not a movement to break laws. It is a movement which indirectly helps the war effort.

I cannot tolerate the idea that I should sit idle, or the people should sit idle in their houses, while the battle for India is being fought between foreign armies, and the Japanese are invading the country. How we can function depends on changing circumstances. In the actual area of invasion we might function in one way and in another area in a different way. But the background will be the same, that is, we are not going to surrender to the invader. Just as we have not given in to the British during the last twenty-two years, in the same way we are certainly not going to give in to a foreign invader. I want to fight this idea that we must remain passive, that we cannot do anything against the Japanese invader, that the one is really as good or as bad as the other. I cannot tolerate these conceptions. I am not going to give in to Britain if it wants to exploit or rule over India. Much less do I want the Indian people to give in or be passive to the Japanese. I want them to resist the Japanese to the uttermost, resist them in the Congress way, which is open to us, and which can be applied by a large population, that is, not giving supplies and embarrassing them in every way that a widely spread population can. Remember that an invading army after all operates in a limited area. On its right and left flanks it comes into touch with the local population. Over wide areas no army is present. It is our duty and the Congressmen's duty and the duty of all other persons to carry out this programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency to the utmost. Maybe we have to take up guerilla warfare. I don't know what the Congress will decide. But it is this foundation, and this organisation that we are building up, that will ultimately help us to meet the present situation. My general advice is: Do not submit or surrender, do not give supplies, noncooperate with the aggressor, embarrass him in every way. Fighting will be done by the armed forces.

There is a difference in the approach to the resistance we have been offering to the British in India and our approach to the resistance to a new invader. We submit to neither, of course; but as you know, for the last two and a half years we have expressed our sympathy with certain larger causes; we have expressed our intense antipathy to fascism and Nazism, to what the Japanese have done in China and Manchuria. And so far as our foreign outlook is concerned, during the last many years we have followed a definite line that influences us immediately in regard to our attitude to this war. Before the war we criticised the policy of appeasement in Munich. That outlook governs us today also. I feel definitely that it would be a tragedy for the world if Germany and Japan won this war and dominated the world. I don't want that to happen. I would have liked to play my part in this world drama more effectively. That was why I went to the utmost limit to come to terms with the British Government.

Our policy as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi and others was not one of causing embarrassment except psychological embarrassment. If our approach had not been one of sympathy, our attitude would have been one of direct embarrassment and we could have broken the whole war effort in India, both in regard to production and in regard to the army proper. We did not do that because of wider sympathy for the larger cause; while we wanted to dissociate ourselves from the activities of the British Government, we did not want to embarrass them.

In regard to the Japanese invasion, we are out to embarrass them to the utmost because there is a difference between a new invasion and an old invasion. But there is another difference also. So far as I am concerned, in spite of the language of high authority it uses, the British invasion is a played out affair and the new invasion may not be so. But ultimately our attitude is governed by our ideological sympathy with certain causes. It is a hateful notion that after five years of war China should be defeated. It is a hateful notion that Russia, which represents certain human values which mean a great deal to human civilization, should be defeated.

But ultimately, naturally, I have to judge every question from the Indian viewpoint. If India perishes I must say—selfishly, if you like to call it—it does not do me any good if other nations survive.

Q: Do you not think that Indians are more anti-British in their sentiment compared to their anti-Japanese feelings?

JN: So far as I know India, and I know it tolerably well, the major sentiment in India naturally is one of hostility to the British in India. You cannot root out 150 years of past history and all that happened in those years. It has sunk deep down into the Indian mind. Suppose we had come to an agreement and had to convert or change that sentiment suddenly, we could have done it if we could have given a sensation of freedom to the people of India.

The fundamental factor today is distrust or dislike of the British Government. It is not pro-Japanese sentiment. It is anti-British sentiment that may occasionally lead individuals to express pro-Japanese views. But this is short-sightedness. It is a slave's sentiment and a slave's way of thinking that to get rid of one person who is dominating us we can expect another person to help us and in turn not dominate us later. A lover of freedom ought not to think that way.

It distresses me that any Indian should talk of the Japanese liberating India. The whole past history of Japan has been one of dominating others. Japan comes here either for imperialist reasons straightway or to fight with the British Government. Anyhow, whatever the reason, if it comes here, it will not come here to liberate.

Q: If an army comes here under the leadership of Subhas, what should be our reaction to it?

JN: I do not, frankly speaking, doubt the *bonafides* of Mr. Bose. I think he has come to a certain conclusion, which I think is wrong, but nevertheless a conclusion which he thinks is for the good of India. We parted company with him many years ago. Since then we have drifted further apart and today we are very far from each other. It is not good enough for me, because of my past friendship and because I do not challenge his motives, to say anything against him. But I do realise that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only cannot accept but must oppose, if it takes shape. Because any force that may come from outside, will really come as a dummy force under Japanese control. It is a bad thing psychologically for the Indian masses to think in terms of being liberated by an outside agency.

I think it is the job and duty of every Indian to be in India today, to face the dangers and risks, whatever might happen in India.

A suggestion was made to me by Colonel Johnson that he would be glad if I could go to America on a brief visit. But I decided not to go at a time of national peril like the present one.

Q: What are the possible intentions of Subhas Bose *vis-a-vis* the Axis Powers?

JN: I do not know his intentions. One thing seems to me obvious. How Mr. Bose will function I cannot say, but presuming the authenticity of the broadcasts, it seems he has taken up a certain position of friendship and alliance with the Axis Powers and from that certain consequences naturally follow. I think it is justifiable, on the basis of those broadcasts, which presumably are his, to come to the conclusion that he has allied himself with the Axis Powers, on what conditions and terms I cannot say.

Q: How can the United Nations help India now?

JN: The best thing they can do is to acknowledge India as an independent nation. I am prepared to welcome help and assistance from any nation or nations, if they are prepared to recognise India as an independent nation. That is all that I desire. I am quite convinced that America will like real popular war effort in India.

Q: Do you agree with Mahatma Gandhi on the question of scorched earth policy?

JN: I don't agree with Mahatmaji. Although I have given this straight answer, it is not a complete answer. I have no doubt that if I were in the National Government, I would have burnt and destroyed everything that could help the enemy, not caring whose private property it was; but I am afraid if the British Government as constituted today follows this policy, it would follow it in a wrong and perverted way, thinking partly of hampering India a great deal. Therefore, I am not prepared to trust to their scorched earth policy.

There are many ways of getting over the loss consequent on the adoption of a scorched earth policy, like the insurance scheme in Britain. There should be a Government guarantee, may be America might come into the picture, that every help will be given to rebuild the destroyed industries and that they will be given the same shape as before if not better.

204. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, the US President, on the Breakdown of Negotiations, 12 April 1942

Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 482-3.

Dear Mr. President,

I am venturing to write to you as I know that you are deeply interested in the Indian situation today and its reactions on the war. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission to bring about a settlement between the British Government and the Indian people must have distressed you, as it has distressed us. As you know we have struggled for long years for the independence of India, but the peril of today made us desire above everything else that an opportunity should be given to us to organize a real national and popular resistance to the aggressor and invader. We were convinced that the right way to do this would have been to give freedom and independence to our people and ask them to defend it. That would have lighted a spark in millions of hearts, which would have developed into a blazing fire of resistance which no aggressor could have faced successfully.

If that was not to be as we wished it and considered necessary for the purposes of the war, the least that we considered essential was the formation of a truly National Government today with power and responsibility to organize resistance on a popular basis. Unfortunately even that was not considered feasible or desirable by the British Government. I do not wish to trouble you with the details of what took place during the negotiations that have unfortunately failed for the present. You have no doubt been kept informed about them by your representatives here. I only wish to say how anxious and eager we were, and still are, to do our utmost for the defence of India and to associate ourselves with the larger causes of freedom and democracy. To us it is a tragedy that we cannot do so in the way and in the measure we would like to. We would have liked to stake everything in the defence of our country, to fight with all the strength and vitality that we possess, to count no cost and no sacrifice as too great for repelling the invader and securing freedom and independence for our country.

Our present resources may be limited, for the industrialization of our country has been hindered by the policy pursued in the past by the British Government in India. We are a disarmed people. But our war potential is very great, our manpower vast and our great spaces, as in China, would have helped us. Our production can be speeded up greatly with the cooperation of capital and labour. But all this war potential can only be utilized fully when the government of the country is intimately associated with and representative of the people.

A government divorced from the people cannot get a popular response which is so essential; much less can a foreign government, which is inevitably disliked and distrusted, do so.

Danger and peril envelop us and the immediate future is darkened by the shadows of possible invasion and the horrors that would follow, as they have followed Japanese aggression in China. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission has added to the difficulties of the situation and reacted unfavourably on our people. But whatever the difficulties we shall face them with all our courage and will to resist. Though the way of our choice may be closed to us, and we are unable to associate ourselves with the activities of the British authorities in India, still we shall do our utmost not to submit to Japanese or any other aggression and invasion. We, who have struggled for so long for freedom and against an old aggression, would prefer to perish rather than submit to a new invader.

Our sympathies, as we have so often declared, are with the forces fighting against fascism and for democracy and freedom. With freedom in our own country, those sympathies could have been translated into dynamic action.

To your great country, of which you are the honoured head, we send greetings and good wishes for success. And to you, Mr. President, on whom so many all over the world look for leadership in the cause of freedom, we would add our assurances of our high regard and esteem.

Sincerely yours,

Jawaharlal Nehru

205. A Personal Letter from Sir Stafford Cripps to Jawaharlal Nehru
Making a Final Appeal, April 1942

Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 481–2.

My dear Jawaharlal

Let me make a final appeal to you, upon whom rests the great burden of decision—so far-reaching in its bearing upon the future relations of our two peoples that its magnitude is indeed portentous.

We can and must carry our people through to friendship and cooperation—I in my sphere, you in yours.

The chance which now offers cannot recur. Other ways may come if this fails but never so good a chance to cement the friendship of our people.

Leadership—the sort of leadership you have—can alone accomplish the result. It is the moment for the supreme courage of a great leader to face all the risks and difficulties—and I know they are there—to drive through to the desired end.

I know your qualities, and your capacity and I beg you to make use of them now.

Yours always
Affectionately,
Stafford



206. 'Cripps Began Badly but Ended Well. Congress Began Well but Ended Badly': T.B. Saprú's Assessment of the Cripps Mission in a Letter to Shiva Rao, 12 April 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. R-216, Roll No. S1/5, NMML.

... Before leaving for Lucknow I had heard on the radio and come to know from the press telegrams that the negotiations were about to fail and while at Lucknow I read in the papers that they had completely broken down. Late in the evening I met an important gentleman who had arrived yesterday from Delhi and gathered from him what had passed there.

Does not all that has happened once again prove that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip? I am more sorry than I can tell you. I can sum up the whole thing as follows:

Cripps began badly but ended well. Congress began well but ended badly. I have just been reading the correspondence. I think Cripps is quite right in saying that this talk of responsible national government at the Centre was started at the eleventh hour.

Throughout the discussions right up to the 5th when I left Delhi everybody took it for granted that the Viceroy's Executive Council would be expanded and that the Council would be responsible to the Crown. It was on that basis that discussions between Mr. Rajagopalachari and myself followed. Cripps is quite right in suggesting that this is an after-thought. It may be that the Congress wanted responsibility to the Legislature, and we of the Non-Party Conference wanted responsibility, during the period of the war, to the Crown.

I had foreseen the difficulties which would arise in pressing for responsibility to the legislature, and accordingly I put forward my suggestion nearly two years ago. I believe—and I have good reasons to believe—that there have been intrigues behind the scene. The fact that the proposals were from the very beginning damned by the Mahatma has in the end turned out to be true. I have heard—but I cannot say how far it is true, that at the last moment the opponents to the proposals in the Working Committee consulted the Mahatma. That may or may not be true but the impression created in the world will be that the Congress has funké responsibility and that it is an impossible body to negotiate with. I feel that with all his fine intellect and fine character Mr. Rajagopalachari is not a free man in his own party and some other leaders who showed moderation in the beginning were afraid that they might lose caste with their own people in the end if they persisted in their course of moderation. What may happen in the future no one can say but one thing is certain and that is that you will not easily get even after the war terms like these. I did not care much for some of the provisions of the Cripps declaration but I feel that the gulf between the two schools of thought over the defence question had been nearly bridged.

Cripps' great mistake was to have assumed from the very beginning that the only body which mattered in India was the Congress and the one person in the Congress who mattered was Jawaharlal. He must have realized by now that Jawaharlal counts for little so far as actual decisions of the Congress are concerned. He must have also realized by now that the Congress cannot be depended upon for settlement. For the moment and for some time to come we shall be damned in America and China and probably in Russia. The breakdown will bring joy to the hearts of the enemy and the disaster to India will be all the greater now. Of course there are many people who have all along thought that we should not fight. I have received silly letters from various people during the last few days to this effect. That has not been my view. I have all along been for resistance to the enemy if the difficulty about Defence could be got

over by a working and practical formula. Cripps' position in public life in England may have shaken but he has scored points over the Congress. Still it leaves me unshaken in my opinion that he was a bad negotiator, began badly, alienated some people and was not able to win over the support of others. On the other hand it is once again demonstrated that it is absurd for any one of us to think that the Congress can act otherwise than as a party aiming for its own supremacy over everybody else. There is nothing more to say. So far as I am concerned I shall be silent and sorrowfully silent.

207. 'City Leaders Deplore Cripps' Failure': News Item on the Response by the Prominent Leaders of Bombay City to the Breakdown of Negotiations, 12 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 13 April 1942.

The breakdown of the negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps representing the British War Cabinet and the leaders of the Indian National Congress and other parties is universally regretted by all sections of political opinion in the city.

While Mr. N.M. Joshi characterised the breakdown as a calamity of the first magnitude, Mr. Munshi called it a catastrophe for the cause of Democracy the world over. Mr. Joshi while not willing to apportion blame, was of the view that a united Executive Council consisting of representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League could have had its way, whatever the legal powers of the Viceroy might be.

While the spokesmen of the Muslim League do not desire to express any opinion at this stage, Mr. Hooseinbhoj Lalji representing independent Muslim opinion, in an interview with a representative of the 'Bombay chronicle' suggested that another attempt should be made by calling a joint conference of representatives of the chief political parties.

What Next? Asks Joshi

Mr. N.M. Joshi in the course of an interview with a representative of the 'Bombay Chronicle' said—'The failure of the negotiations between Sir Stafford Cripps and the Indian leaders at Delhi is a calamity of the first magnitude. Although Sir Stafford has failed to achieve his object, India owes a deep debt of gratitude to him for making a great effort in the interests of the defence and freedom of India.

'His failure which is due to deep rooted mutual distrust between India and Great Britain is no discredit to him. I still feel that a compromise between the British Government and the Indian leaders was practicable and should have been made.

'I have no doubt that a United Executive Council fully representative of the Congress and the Muslim league could be depended upon to secure the enforcement of its will in the policy and administration of the Government of India in all matters, including defence and thus become a truly national Government of India whether the Viceroy had agreed or not to surrender his powers formally.

Not only is there nothing wrong in the national cabinet making a judicious use of their power of resignation in securing acceptance by the Viceroy of their policy and actions, but history teaches us that constitutional responsibility has been realized and established in most democracies by the use of this power of resignation.

There is no use trying to apportion blame for the failure of the negotiations between different parties. We have now to consider. What next?

The Hon. Mr. M.M. Pakvasa said—‘Personally. I regret that the negotiations have broken down. Who could have helped being happy at the prospect of the transfer of real power to the people of India from the hands of a foreign Government in the most non-violent way imaginable even at this late hour. But for the present that has not happened. I would like to believe that whatever may be the reaction of the parties concerned, every one will take the result in these dangerous times without recrimination or resentment and still pursue the path of present duty without anger. May all so speak or act as to avoid bitterness in this hour of trial of our country.’

Blow to Democracy

Mr. K.M. Munshi said—‘The failure of the Cripps Mission is a first class catastrophe for the cause of Democracy the world over. The redeeming feature is that the negotiations were conducted in a spirit of extreme friendliness showing that there was a common desire to fight the menace of an invasion of India.’

Suggestion to Cripps

Mr. Hooseinbhoj Lalji said—‘I am very sorry to hear about the breakdown of the Delhi talks. I wish both the League and Congress leaders had met before sending a reply to Sir Stafford. If this procedure is followed even now we will have ample opportunity to save the country. I should certainly ask Sir Stafford Cripps once again in the interests of both England and India to have a conference of a few selected representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League and a sprinkling of independent persons who would try to remove all misunderstanding.’

208. ‘Congress Wanted All or Nothing’: Cripps’s Press Conference in Karachi, 12 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 14 April 1942.

‘We shall not take any further initiative to solve your problem. Now it is for Indians themselves to evolve a constitution which may be acceptable to all classes and communities,’ declared Sir Stafford Cripps, who arrived here today ‘*en route*’ to London, at a Press conference at Government House.

Sir Stafford Cripps said: ‘I took the trouble of this journey to India knowing what the Congress demands were, namely, a Constituent Assembly and the recognition of India’s right to independence.

Here I was confronted with a new problem, and I admit to be the author of that passage where in I advocated India’s right to self-determination, although that will lead to the breaking of the British Empire, etc. This is possible only in peace times.

Presently our only concern is to resist the enemy. In the circumstances, the only possible solution was my projected National Government. Several minority leaders expressed grave fears against majority rule in case the Congress demand was accepted.’

‘I have not lost hope that the people of India would some day come to an agreement. There are always chances. We have to come to some arrangement some day. I have no idea when it will be. It depends on Indians themselves, on Indian parties and Indian leaders’, declared Sir Stafford Cripps.

'We have offered everything we could: there is nothing more to offer; there is no good in discussing the past history,' said Sir Stafford, questioned with regard to the statement in his broadcast that Indian National Government as envisaged by the Congress would be a sort of Cabinet dictatorship not responsible to any body or people.

Sir Stafford agreed that leaders would not of course lose their representative character when they joined Government but as the Congress required it National Government would not be responsible to the Viceroy and in the present state of war emergency it was essential that there should be some control over such a Cabinet. In all forms of Government there must be some form of control over Cabinet and at the present emergency the Viceroy could not divest himself of his powers.

Question of Connection

When asked whether it was not possible to establish certain conventions regarding Viceregal veto without making any immediate alterations in constitution itself Sir Stafford said that he was prepared to leave it entirely to the discretion of the Viceroy to settle relations with Cabinet but the Congress was not satisfied with this position.

Asked what insuperable difficulty there could be in having fresh elections in the country with a view to forming a really National Government as was done in war time in Egypt and Canada Sir Stafford said, 'Egypt is different. We have no control over Egypt. Canada also is different. There war is not as near as in India.'

He emphatically declared that it was not possible to change the constitution without months and years of conferences and discussions.

When a correspondent asked him, 'What about England'. Sir Stafford smiled and replied, 'we have no written constitution in England.'

Fundamental Difference

Sir Stafford said that point about Cabinet responsibility did not rise till the last day in Delhi. It was not correct to say that it was sprung on him as a surprise by the Congress but when all other problems had been discussed and disposed on this point emerged.

Asked how his present proposal to form a fuller Executive Council with representatives of the Congress, the Muslim League and other parties was an improvement on the old one if the ultimate responsibility was the Viceroy's as now. Sir Stafford said that all this while Government had been accused of having no real representatives of the people on the council and here was an opportunity given to representative of the people to come together under the present constitution.

I personally attach very great importance to it. If there was such representation it would be able to exert influence of its own weight.

The Congress wanted all or nothing: they could not have all so they got nothing.

Asked whether the Congress and the League and other parties had given him an assurance that they would be prepared to pull their weight and co-operate in all non-political activities for the defence of the country Sir Stafford said 'I do not know, my own view is that the majority of the people will do all they can to help the war.

I hope they will do so. It makes it more effective if they join the existing Government and co-operate with it now: it makes it more difficult without joining Government.'

Asked whether there would be more repression in the country in the wake of this breakdown of talks Sir Stafford said 'If they really interfered with war activities there would be trouble: after all somebody has to carry on the war.'

No Separate Peace

Questioned whether at any time he really felt that if full powers were to be given to the Congress at some stage or other of the war National Government would make some kind of peace with any invader, Sir Stafford asserted that such a thought never entered his mind. All leaders had been quite positive on the point, they never wanted any kind of peace with aggressive nations.

Asked whether there was no possibility of Government reopening the question again if they could arrive at an agreed solution Sir Stafford said that British Government was at all times prepared to consider any agreed solution if that was put to them but made it clear that the initiative itself should come from Indians.

When pressmen suggested whether the present breakdown did not amount to a permanent veto on progress by small minorities in the country Sir Stafford Cripps said I cannot consider seventy millions a small minority nor would I consider the Sikhs and depressed classes as small minorities.

The minorities cannot certainly stop anything happening but it does not mean that the views of these minorities can be disregarded.

Asked whether the British Cabinet could not have concentrated at the present time on immediate changes rather than the post-war constitution Sir Cripps said that if he had come with proposals for immediate changes without some proposals for the post-war status he could not have remained for five minutes in India.

He asserted that he did not blame anybody for the failure of his mission.

At Congress Invitation

Sir Stafford made it clear that the part played by Col. Johnson was entirely unofficial and in his individual capacity with a view to give advice and help in arriving at a settlement.

It was actually Congress who first approached Col. Johnson for help and President Roosevelt had no part in it.

He also told pressmen that he had not resiled from his old views that complete self-determination was the only solution for the Indian problems and he still held the old socialistic views that any such self-determination was totally incompatible with any kind of imperialistic ideals but the present situation was different, they had to win the present war.

209. Jawaharlal Nehru's Rejoinder to Cripps's Press Conference in Karachi, 13 April 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 230–1.

Sir Stafford Cripps's statement made in Karachi about Congress leaders going to Colonel Louis Johnson and his acting as mediator is not correct and is liable to be misunderstood. Sir Stafford has not been fair either to Colonel Johnson or to the Congress leaders. There was never any question, as I have stated previously, of our asking for mediation or arbitration from anyone and President Roosevelt's name has been needlessly dragged into this matter. We dealt with Sir Stafford alone though others were naturally interested in the developments that were

taking place. Colonel Johnson did not interfere in any way, though of course he expressed his desire that a satisfactory settlement should be reached. We are grateful to Colonel Johnson for his friendly approach to our problems though in the nature of things he could not interfere in what was taking place.

Sir Stafford has told us that the British Government is not going to take any further initiative to solve the Indian problem. We expect no initiative from them as they have managed to get completely stuck in the ruts of their own making. We do not rely on the British Government for anything except to obstruct political and economic advance in India. The initiative lies with others who do not live in the ruts. The dominating factor of the situation is the fact that India can only be defended effectively as a free country by the people themselves acting through their national government. I notice that parts of what I have said, torn from their context, have been given publicity by some sections of the press and by the radio. This is not fair. I think it is every Indian's duty to refuse submission to every aggression, old and new, and to resist it. We cannot and must not submit for that way lies a surrender of the soul and spirit of the nation. But it must be realised that effective resistance is not an individual matter and no one can deliver the goods except a free national government with power and responsibility, which can enthuse and organise the masses. This patent fact cannot be ignored and this is the crux of the question in India.

210. 'Azad Refutes Cripps's Charge': Maulana Azad's Reply to Sir Stafford Cripps's Karachi Statement, 13 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 14 April 1942.

'Sir Stafford Cripps is reported to have said in the course of an interview at Karachi before leaving India that Congress leaders first went to see Col. B. Johnson, who acted as a mediator in his personal capacity,' says Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President.

The Maulana adds: 'This is likely to create an impression that this mediation was sought by us. Facts, however, are otherwise.'

On or about the first April, a common friend informed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that Col. Johnson was anxious to meet him, and would be glad if a meeting could be arranged at his residence. Accordingly Pandit Nehru met him. Again it was by a pure accident that on the 3rd April while I was on my way to pick him up, and there I found Col. Johnson. Naturally, we met, and had a brief talk. At the end of this talk, Col. Johnson expressed a desire that in the event of the Working Committee coming to an adverse decision, he should be allowed a chance to see if he could be helpful before the committee's final verdict was formally communicated to Sir Stafford Cripps. His wish was so obviously in the interest of the common object, namely, the successful conclusion of Sir Stafford Cripps mission, that I saw no objection in complying with it.

It is hardly necessary to narrate the rest of the story. But I must make it perfectly clear that nobody on behalf of the Congress sought, either Col. Johnson or President Roosevelt's intervention, although in the very nature of things, Col. Johnson's friendly interest was appreciated.'



211. Letter from M.N. Roy to Lord Linlithgow (with Enclosures)
Suggesting an Alternative Proposal, 13 April 1942
Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 124, NMML.

Sir,

Ever since the National Congress decided to oppose India's participation in the war, and precipitated the constitutional deadlock by withdrawing its representatives from office, I have been urging the necessity of reinforcing the Government in the Centre as well as in the deadlocked Provinces with the co-operation of popular public men who are prepared to set aside all other issues for concentrating thought and energy on the immediate task of defeating the Axis Powers militarily, and destroying the evil of Fascism which menaces the achievements of modern civilization.

On several occasions, I took the liberty of addressing Your Excellency in this connection with concrete proposals. Presumably, the hope of eventually persuading the Congress leaders to take a more reasonable, responsible and realistic attitude, precluded any alternative arrangement.

From the very beginning, I was skeptical about the outcome of Sir Stafford Cripps' mission, and questioned the wisdom of the British War Cabinet's latest effort to appease the irresponsible Indian party leaders and politicians.

I sent to Your Excellency a Memorandum to be submitted to Sir Stafford Cripps on his arrival. A copy of the document was also addressed to Your Excellency.

Now that the last effort to secure the co-operation of the major party leaders has failed, I permit myself the liberty of urging the necessity of immediately implementing the offer of His Majesty's Government in the manner suggested in my Memorandum to Sir Stafford Cripps.

I venture to suggest that withdrawal of the offer, because it has been rejected by parties and politicians who have all along taken up an unhelpful and irresponsible attitude, would seriously prejudice the war efforts of India. The opportunity should be available to others, who are ready to co-operate and have a greater sense of public responsibility. Moreover, withdrawal of the offer would be unjust and unfair to the popular men and organizations who have all along stood for India's participation in the war, and who, given the power and responsibility offered to the non co-operating parties and politicians, could successfully counteract the evil influence of the latter and turn the tide of public opinion.

Therefore, I earnestly hope that your Excellency would consider this proposal of making an early declaration to the effect that the Government of India would be immediately reconstructed, according to the spirit of His Majesty's Government's offer, with the co-operation of independent public men and popular organizations ready to accept the offer in order to mobilize more effectively all Indian energy and resources in support of the common cause of the United Nations in the war against Fascism.

While drawing Your Excellency's attention to the suggestions made in this respect in my Memorandum to Sir Stafford Cripps, I venture to attach herewith an *aide-memoire*, outlining some general principles to be incorporated in the desired declaration, and including some alterations of the original document, necessitated by what has happened in the meantime.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
M.N. Roy

(Enclosure)**Aide-Memoire**

1. India is a member of the Commonwealth. Necessary constitutional procedure for the formal establishment of the relation to be in force forthwith, for all practical purposes, will be completed immediately after the war.

2. This war is going to change the world. India cannot remain unchanged, not only as regards her political status: her economic life also is bound to receive a great impetus.

Absolutely sovereign National States will be an anachronism, and economic inter-relations among nations will be closer. To progress politically towards the goal of a greater freedom, the Indian people will find it necessary and desirable to transcend the limits of a relatively isolated national existence. The potentialities of their economic life will be fully unfolded only in the context of a scheme of world reconstruction after the war.

3. The history of the relation between Britain and India is bound to culminate in a free, mutually beneficial, association of two countries, as equal members of a Commonwealth. Therefore, His Majesty's Government have sympathized with the Indian aspiration for the establishment of a National Government. They have been only too eager to see Indian leaders in positions of power, shouldering the responsibility of shaping the destiny of their country in the midst of this world conflagration caused by the enemies of human freedom and progress. But with all their sincere goodwill and perseverance, His Majesty's Government could not overcome difficulties, not of their creation.

4. Nevertheless, His Majesty's Government once again expressed their anxiety to make a declaration, recognizing India's right of self-determination, subject to the provision that the right would be available also to the great minorities, and offering to transfer the entire responsibility of administration, in the interim period, to Indians, so that all thought and energy could be concentrated on the immediate task of defending the country against the imminent invasion by the Japanese aggressor. Unfortunately, the offer has not been accepted by the major political parties.

5. But India must be defended, and the responsibility belongs primarily to the Indians. Everything should be done to enable them to discharge the responsibility with credit and success. Therefore, the establishment of a National Government can no longer be delayed, by the obstructionist policy of the Congress and the unreasonable and unhelpful attitude of other parties.

I propose to go ahead with measures necessary for the defence of India's freedom, and for the promotion of the welfare of the Indian people. Having failed to secure the co-operation of the party leaders, I have decided to establish a National Government on a non-party basis,—a Government composed not of party representatives, but of individuals chosen on their merit. Co-operation of gentlemen possessed of the requisite qualifications, who may belong to this or that party, would also be welcome, provided that they come forward to shoulder collective responsibility as individuals, not answerable to any particular party.

In these fateful days, the cause of India's political progress and general welfare can be promoted only by far-sighted patriots, who realize that the national interests of India cannot be separated from those of the rest of the world, and that therefore they are conditional upon the defeat of the forces of evil bent upon the destruction of all the glorious achievements of modern civilization, which have laid down a solid foundation for a new world of greater freedom and

equality. India is not wanting in such patriots. A Government composed of men, chosen from among them, will be a truly National Government as well as a strong Government, which the country needs so very urgently in this great crisis.

6. Practical promotion of the welfare of the people is the essence of democracy. Defeat of the Axis Powers and destruction of the evil of Fascism, which has become an international phenomenon are the conditions for the future welfare of mankind, which includes the Indian nation. Therefore, a Government which will set aside all other considerations for concentrating the entire energy and resources on the crucial task of winning the war, would be a truly Democratic Government. By applying itself to this task, with a single-minded purpose, it will be representing the will of the people, who would suffer untold misery if Fascism triumphed.

7. A National Government could and should make room also for Englishmen who, though not born in this country, have made it their home, for all practical purposes. Their future is bound up with the future of this country. They must have a share in the making of that future. Nor can the experience, represented by the official element, be altogether dispensed with during the transition period. It will only strengthen the national Government, without affecting in the least its national and democratic character.

8. Military defence is a purely professional matter. No useful purpose will be served by placing the Department in charge of a non-official, who may not possess the requisite knowledge and experience to administer it efficiently. But what has come to be known as Civil Defence is of more importance. The unfortunate effort of the anti-war propaganda carried on for two years and a half, and done even now, must be removed if India is to be successfully defended. Popular morale is the decisive weapon in this war. With its scope widened and its functions clearly defined, the Department of Civil Defence will successfully accomplish the most vital task of creating the psychological conditions for a popular resistance to aggression. This all-important Department shall be in charge of an Indian.

9. A National Government in the Centre alone will not be able to cope with the situation, unless the deadlock in a number of Provinces is terminated. There also, Emergency measures are needed to tide over the crisis. The Legislative Assemblies cannot function. Moreover, they have become out of date. The issue of the war, on which the deadlock occurred, was not before the electorate during the last election. Therefore, the present Legislative Assemblies may not be regarded as the only accredited mouthpiece of the opinion of the electorate on the burning issue of the war. In any case, having failed to function owing to the obstructionist policy of the majority party, the Legislative Assemblies in those Provinces may be formally dissolved. But under the ominous shadow of an invasion, a general election is out of the question. A general election of all the Provincial Assemblies as well as of the Central Assembly will be held immediately after the war.

Until then, Provincial administrations may be carried on by Emergency Ministries, to be composed also according to the principal visualised for application to the establishment of a National Government in the Centre. Until the next election, the Ministers may regard themselves as responsible directly to the people, and discharge the responsibility by introducing measures which will protect popular interest and promote popular welfare, in addition to the supreme task of the moment, which is to intensify war efforts, no matter however great sacrifices that may involve.

10. India's right of self-determination having been recognized, ways and means for its exercise by the Indians must be devised. The national Government I propose to establish

will take complete steps in that direction, and thus prove itself to be the most trustworthy and representative guardian of the welfare of the Indian people. The fundamental principles of a Democratic Constitution suitable for the outstanding peculiarities of the conditions of this country will be formulated, and the people will be given the opportunity as well as all the facilities to express their considered opinion about them. Thus, a freely given, intelligent, popular sanction will be available for the skeleton of a generally agreed Constitution.

11. Such a Constitution, framed with the consent and active participation of the entire people, under the initiative and guidance of a National Government composed of independent men, will establish in India the democratic freedom, for which the progressive forces throughout the world are fighting, and to the victory in which epoch-making fight India will readily contribute.

Freedom is not an abstract ideal. For the masses of the people in India as well as in all other countries, it has a definite connotation. It means freedom from all sorts of want, privations and disadvantages, which often render their daily life a dreadful drudgery. India's striving for such freedom has the fullest sympathy of the British people as well as the United Nations engaged in a grim struggle against the enemies of human freedom and therefore His Majesty's Government will help its early establishment in every possible way. A prosperous and strong India shall emerge out of this titanic struggle for the freedom and progress of mankind.

212. M.A. Jinnah's Statement at a Press Conference on Cripps Proposals, Explaining Why Muslim League Rejected the Proposals, 13 April 1942

Speeches, Statements and Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam, Vol. III, pp. 1560-4.

The Congress claim of representing the whole of India was effectively repudiated and totally exposed by Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah at a press conference.

Explaining why the Muslim League had to reject His Majesty's Government's proposals, brought by Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Jinnah said: 'The proposals of His Majesty's Government were in their fundamentals not subject to modification. I was told that they should be accepted in *toto* but not in parts. His Majesty's Government had not authorized Sir Stafford Cripps to consider any alternative either for the present or the future. Regarding the immediate present, it was not open to us to suggest any alternative as we had to accept the proposals as a whole or not at all. We could not, therefore, discard the future and deal with the present. In effect, Pakistan was not conceded unequivocally and the right of Muslim self-determination was denied. We, therefore, did not accept the proposals regarding the future.

Referring to the recent statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru he said: 'I find that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in talking to press correspondents still speaks of the Congress as representing India and speaking on behalf of India. There is no foundation for that assertion. Muslim India has repudiated that claim. We maintain that the Congress does not represent not only the Mussalmans of India but even a large body of the Hindus, the Depressed Classes, the non-Brahmins and other minorities.'

Referring to the Cripps proposals Mr. Jinnah said: 'The proposals of His Majesty's Government were in their fundamentals not subject to modification. Therefore, after clarification by Sir Stafford Cripps, the Muslim League examined them carefully. I was told that they should be accepted in *toto* but not in parts. We could not, therefore, discard the future and deal with the present. Further, that the immediate present could only be considered if the

future was agreed upon and that his Majesty's Government had not authorized Sir Stafford Cripps to consider any alternative either for the present or the future. That being the position, we examined the whole of the proposal as one document and came to the conclusion that, as regards the future, the principle of partition (Pakistan) was not conceded, but there was possibility for a province or provinces to stand out. The machinery provided for that purpose was such that we came to the conclusion that in two Muslim majority provinces the rules of procedure laid down were such that the fate of ninety million Mussalmans would be decided by a few votes in the provincial legislatures where the Muslims are, as in Bengal and the Punjab, in a minority in this legislature—these being the major Muslim provinces. Similarly, in the Muslim majority provinces, N.W.F.P. and Sind, the weightage given to non-Muslims would make it extremely difficult for the Mussalmans to realize their goal. In effect Pakistan was not conceded unequivocally and the right of Muslim self-determination was denied. We, therefore, did not accept the proposals regarding the future, although we recognized that the same may constitute the foundations of British policy as a historic document.

The recognition given to the principle of partition, however, was very much appreciated by Muslim India.'

Present

'Regarding the immediate present, it was not open to us to suggest any alternatives, as we had to accept the proposal as a whole or not at all. Having decided on the future we thought no useful purpose would be served in discussing the present and further we thought that until the complete picture was available it was not possible for us to deal with it. Details with regard to the present were of vital importance, and in this case they were more important than the principles themselves. No discussion, however, took place between me and Sir Stafford Cripps regarding the present period, except that details would be worked out and settled by the Viceroy with the parties concerned.

'I now gather from the maze of correspondence and statements that have been issued that the Congress leaders alleged that Sir Stafford Cripps was discussing with them alternative proposals of theirs, which fact has been denied by Sir Stafford Cripps. I have no knowledge of what took place between Sir Stafford and the Congress, but I may add that if alternative proposals of the Congress were accepted—immediate freedom and independence of India, cabinet to be nominated by major parties with collective responsibility, the Viceroy to act as constitutional Governor-General and the Secretary of State and His Majesty's Government having no power to interfere—it would have meant the setting up of a cabinet, irremovable and responsible to nobody but the majority, which would be at the command of the Congress in the cabinet. If such an adjustment had been arrived at, then it would have been a 'Fascist Grand Council' and the Muslims and other minorities would have been entirely at the mercy of the Congress raj.

'Then to say that the future would be considered after war is to my mind absurd, because there would be nothing left of the future to discuss, except details.'

Congress Game

'We stand for freedom and independence, yielding to none in that respect, but the Congress scheme will not bring freedom and independence for the Mussalmans and other minorities of India who will be at the entire mercy of the caucus cabinet. Therefore, we hold that the

Congress proposals are short circuiting the paramount and vital issues in the name of national government. This has been the beginning and that is what we have been resisting.

'The Congress recognized that the cabinet formed under its scheme would be a composite cabinet formed from different groups, representing various ideologies in the country, some coming from the Congress, some from the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and the Sikhs. I have noted that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made it quite clear when he said that suppose in a cabinet of fifteen there was Congress majority of eight or nine. Added to that Congress majority would be the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikhs, and the Muslims would be left in a negligible, ineffective minority. The only consolation that Pandit Nehru offered was that if the Mussalmans did not agree they could resign. If this is not a foregone conclusion of the tyranny of the majority, what else could it be?

'I am also surprised to read Pandit Nehru's statement that I would not have objected to the Congress demand for national government. I assert that if the Congress demand had been accepted it would have been the death-knell to the Mussalmans of India.

Concluding, Mr. Jinnah said that the Congress carried on negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps over the head of all other parties whom it utterly ignored.

Questions

Q. Then what is the position of the League?

A. If all parties agree to the Muslim demand for Pakistan or partition and Muslim right of self-determination, details to be settled after the war, then we are prepared to come to any reasonable adjustment with regard to the present.

So far as the Pakistan demand is not agreed to, we cannot agree to any present adjustment which will in any way militate against or prejudice the Pakistan demand.

The demand of the Congress, as explained by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the press conference as disclosed in the correspondence with Sir Stafford Cripps, does definitely prejudice and militate against the Pakistan demand and is, therefore, unacceptable to us.

Q. Then, is it not for the leaders to meet and discuss the matter?

A. It is for the leaders to devise means of doing so.

213. T.B. Sapru's Letter to Jagdish Prasad Providing His Analysis of the Cripps Mission, Why It Failed, the Structure of Congress Politics, and the Mistakes Made by Cripps, 14 April 1942

T.B. Sapru Papers, No. P-252, Roll No. S1/4, NMML.

... I think it was foolish of the Congress to have demanded that the National Government should be recognised forthwith as independent of the control of the Viceroy and of Parliament. No such question was raised until the 5th when I was there and I think Stafford Cripps is quite right in saying that it was raised at the eleventh hour. If Stafford Cripps or the British Government had agreed to this demand of the Congress there would have been an open revolt among the Muslims and the Indian Princes too would have resented it. The fact must be recognised that the Congress want their dictatorship and approach these questions from the point of view as to how best to reinforce their own power.

I have always insisted upon responsibility to the Crown during the period of the war. Rajagopalachari and I carried on our discussions at Delhi on the assumption that the expanded

Executive Council would owe responsibility to the Crown. I believe what has led to the breakdown is the fact that the Mahatma cast his weight on the side of Vallabh Bhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad must have realised that it would not do for them to run counter to the decision of the Mahatma in a matter of this character. It was not difficult for them to foresee what their fate would be inside the party and outside if the Mahatma damned the whole thing. Personally I agree with you that if the Congress Working Committee had decided to accept office in actual practice no such difficulty would have arisen as they imagined or pretended to imagine. You and I who have been inside the Government realise that if the Executive Council is united no Viceroy can readily ignore it and at the present moment when the feeling in the country is so strong and when the Executive Council should consist wholly of Indians it is unthinkable to any mind that the Viceroy would have ignored the Executive Council, but most of our leaders—Congress and non-Congress—are all slaves of formulas, theories and phrases.

My view all along has been that Cripps is a bad negotiator. He seems to have proceeded on the assumption that being a socialist he would be able to carry with him his brother-socialist, Jawaharlal and that Jawaharlal would be able to carry with him the Congress Working Committee. In actual fact when there is a conflict between Jawaharlal and the Mahatma or the Mahatma's own men, like Vallabh Bhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal always goes to the wall. In point of fact so far as actual decisions are concerned he counts for nothing in the Congress. It is the Mahatma first, the Mahatma next and the Mahatma last who does matter. Cripps, therefore, was entirely wrong in his estimate of forces at work inside the Congress camp. I also agree with you that it was unfortunate that Rajagopalachari, the one sane and responsible man in the Congress camp, was forced into the background. I believe if he had carried on the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps the result might have been different. The Indian press will come down on Stafford Cripps and applaud the Congress. The English and the American press is already applauding Cripps. My own view is that Cripps may be a first rate lawyer, but he is a poor statesman and a poorer negotiator. I do not agree with the criticism of the *Statesman* or with the criticism of some of the Congress papers. I think sober truth requires that we should recognize that the Congress is an impossible body to deal with.

You yourself know as well as I do that excepting for the fact that Rajagopalachari was in touch with us Congressmen did not care to take anybody else into confidence. We had already been damned by them and Cripps had been told directly or indirectly that we count for nothing. I am, therefore, not surprised at the attitude of Cripps.

I see that you have already written to Jayakar to go on with his Conference. Speaking for myself I think it is worse than useless for us now to step forward. At any rate so far as I am concerned I am not going to make any statement or to try to pull other parties' chestnuts out of the fire. I should let events develop for themselves. I am not at all sure that it will do any good to call a meeting of the Standing Committee of our Conference at this juncture. In any case I should like to wait until the debate in the House of Commons has taken place.

As regards Col. Johnson I have heard from a reliable source that on the last day there were some sharp passages between him and Jawaharlal Nehru. He actually 'ticked them off'. No doubt the bureaucracy will be happy that the Cripps' mission has failed and that their position is safe and secured. I should not in the slightest degree be surprised if a very strong repressive policy was adopted after the failure of this mission. I do not think that the bureaucracy will tolerate now the sort of speeches or statements that have been delivered so far.

The danger from Japan is increasing day by day. Madras is going to be evacuated. The High Court and the courts there have been closed. Offices of the Government are being removed to districts. Orissa is also another great danger spot. I think the Mahatma's policy and Jawaharlal's servile conformity to it in the end have only tended to expedite the Japanese invasion by a few weeks.

You have referred to changes in the Provinces. Frankly I do not think that any changes are likely to be brought about now or that we can be useful in that direction. For some time my advice is that we should lie low and keep quiet. Already the *Hindustan Standard* of Calcutta, which is really speaking the organ of Subhas Bose and represents the extreme wing of the Congress in any case has attacked Jayakar and myself very severely—and I think very unfairly—over our memorandum. It does not in the slightest degree affect me, but I certainly think that this is not the time for us to make any statements.

214. 'Why Cripps Mission Failed': News Item Making an Assessment of the Failure of Cripps Mission

The Times of India, 15 April 1942.

Delhi is busy taking stock of the political aftermath of the Cripps mission and analyzing the 'gains and losses' as the British Press has aptly described it.

A positive gain is that anti-Axis and in particular, anti-Japanese feelings have been pronouncedly brought out by leaders of all political parties who participated in the Delhi parleys and the enemy must have received a shock at this revelation.

A loss is the sense of frustration which may have been augmented by the failure of the Cripps mission in quarters which were looking forward to a political settlement for pulling their weight in the common struggle.

But an important outcome of the mission, which may be capitalized for a fresh approach for a settlement is the removal of suspicion as to the British motive regarding India's goal. Political India has learnt in words which will be irrevocable, even though the draft declaration is technically withdrawn, that at the end of the war India will be free to decide her own destiny.

The failure of the Cripps mission was largely due to the fact that in his hurry Sir Stafford Cripps put greater emphasis on the future and defined the present by casual generalizations, which left a different impression on the minds of different people. When he realized towards the end of his mission that no major party was prepared to endorse without qualification his proposals relating to the future, he felt that his main object in coming out to India had been frustrated and probably thought it too late to examine the problem afresh.

Fresh Call to Leaders

However, the gains and losses have been balanced, and there is a feeling here that a solution may be attempted locally by a fresh call to Indian leaders to prepare a scheme for a national government under the Viceroy's leadership and that the United Nations may take a hand in bringing about the necessary atmosphere of confidence, so that the keen desire expressed by political leaders to work for the defeat of the Axis Powers may be mobilized as a State enterprises.

There is a suggestion in certain quarters that the Viceroy should invite for this purpose a conference between Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Savarkar and Master Tara Singh and that these leaders should be asked to produce an agreed formula for the formation of the interim

government and that, if necessary, Sir Maurice Gwyer may preside over this conference, so that his judicial training and vast knowledge of constitutional law may help the formulation of a workable scheme.

Alternatively it is suggested that popular governments be restored to the provinces and the Central Executive be formed of one representative each of the provincial Governments.

215. Extract from a Letter by Shiva Rao to T.B. Sapro Analyzing the Proposals and Commenting on the Greater Necessity of the Settlement Rather Than the Nature of the Settlement, 16 April 1942
F. 221/42, Home Poll (I), NAI.

Cripps has gone back a broken-hearted man and some of his statements show annoyance and petulance. At the same time I cannot help feeling that the result might have been very different, if both sides had adopted a more accommodating spirit. To my mind what is of the utmost importance is not the precise formula which enables the Congress or any other party to take office; that might be the proper course in peace time. Today, with the Japanese coming rapidly towards us, every moment counts and even an unsatisfactory settlement today is better than a more satisfactory settlement next week. I think Rajagopalachariar alone, among Congress leaders, has seen the importance of this and, therefore was of the opinion from the beginning that the Congress should not even discuss the Cabinet's declaration but just go straight into office. Unfortunately, he was in a minority of one.

I have reasons to believe that there is a great deal of exchange of views between Delhi and London. The All India Congress Committee, endorsing the verdict of the Working Committee will make the situation no better and possibly worse. If we can produce a generally acceptable formula (defence having been more or less settled), the All India Congress Committee can then be faced with a definite proposal. Some one has to tell Jinnah. He is such an impossible man to deal with that I despair of finding any one who can get into touch with him.

216. 'War Cabinet Not to Blame': Statement of the Labour Party on the Failure of the Mission, Absolving the War Cabinet and Cripps of Any Blame for the Failure of the Mission, 16 April 1942
The Bombay Chronicle, 17 April 1942.

Commenting on the present situation in India the 'Labour Press Service', which is issued by the Labour Party says:

Sir Stafford Cripps has been denied successful result which would have been a fitting crown to his great effort in India. As he rightly stated: 'A great opportunity of rallying India for her defence and her freedom has been missed.'

It will be generally recognised that the failure was not due to the British War Cabinet refusal of any essential to certain attachment of India's independence. Nor does the blame attach to the British representative's handling of his important mission.

It is, we believe universally accepted that Sir Stafford Cripps conducted his difficult negotiations with sympathy and understanding, flexibility of mind and firmness of purpose which are the essence of wise statesmanship.

Throughout the whole free world deep disappointment will be felt that 'the past distrust has proved too strong to allow a present agreement.' British Labour, which from the days of Keir Hanufe and H.M. Hyndman down to the present time, has supported both by voice and influence, India's claim to self-Government, shares in that widespread feeling.

We have good reason to expect that the past distrust of Britain and the absence of the necessary willingness to co-operate internally will not cloud the minds of India's peoples and parties and leaders to the urgency and reality of the danger which threatens from one of the most ruthless enemies of freedom.

Recognition of the danger and the tragic consequences of the failure to overcome it should be a spur to action. Organised voluntary co-operation on the part of India would greatly strengthen the united efforts of peace-loving peoples. We cannot believe that the full measure of India's active co-operation in common defence will be withheld.

217. G.B. Pant's Letter to C.D. Pande Giving His Impressions about the Cripps Mission, 17 April 1942

B.R. Nanda (ed.), *Selected Works of Govind Ballabh Pant*, Vol. 9, Delhi, 1997, p. 397.

What you say about the Cripps affairs is unfortunately correct. Ultimately it has proved worse than a hoax. The last episode was most distasteful and almost wicked. I am still unable to account for the all too sudden deterioration in his attitude. The somersault was simply amazing. You think that this matter should have been cleared up at the outset. But there was no such need as he was quite explicit on the point. He throughout spoke of the National Govt. and at the very first interview he declared that it would function as a cabinet! We were really bewildered when he went back on all he had said and what is worse followed his *volte face* with mischievous and unscrupulous propaganda. One wonders if there is anything to choose between an Amery and a Cripps; the former may be even a whit more dependable, thanks to his rigidity and consistency than the latter. However, this chapter is closed and we need not worry. But most baffling are the problems facing the country and we need all wisdom, courage and patriotism at this fateful hour.

218. T.B. Saprú's Letter to Jagdish Prasad Referring to His Meeting with Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad and Commenting on the Roles Played by Cripps and Others during the Negotiation, 19 April 1942

T.B. Saprú Papers, No. P-254, Roll No. S1/4, NMML.

... Two days ago Jawaharlal Nehru asked me to tea at his daughter's new house in George Town. There I met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. We talked for some time. I told him and Jawaharlal that in my opinion they were wrong in refusing to accept office. They should have accepted office for I believe that even this Viceroy could not have defied their united advice. Both Jawaharlal and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were extremely dissatisfied with Cripps. My dissatisfaction with Cripps is no less great. I did not look upon him as a great statesman or as a skilful negotiator. He had no business to alienate large sections of people such as the Hindu Sabha people and the Sikhs. He should have, in my opinion, established greater contact with Rajagopalachari. Instead of doing that he was literally playing to the gallery and trying to earn cheap popularity with the press. I do not agree with his criticism that the Congress would,

under the scheme of the national government, have been able to establish a party dictatorship. That is absurd. How could there be a party dictatorship when the national government was to consist of Congressmen, Muslim Leaguers and Hindu Sabhais etc. The whole trouble arose because the Congress at the last moment wanted the government to be 'responsible'. Of course there could be no responsibility to the Central Assembly, which is a very mixed body consisting of nominated and elected members. It is for this reason that I have always been pressing for responsibility to the crown during the period of the war. All these technical difficulties could have been got over if the Viceroy had not kept himself behind the Purdah. I cannot imagine any great Viceroy with any sense of appreciation of the danger behaving in this manner. His whole life at Delhi reminds me of the idols in Hindu temples which are visible to their worshippers only at certain times. If he had only stepped forward and invited Congress leaders and Muslim leaders and spoken to them only a word of encouragement and advised them to come into Government that alone, in my opinion, would have altered the attitude of these leaders. This was, however, not to be. Frankly I do not think that there is any chance for any advance with Lord Linlithgow at Delhi and Amery at Whitehall.

As regards Jinnah you can scarcely deal with him as you deal with a politician. He is nothing but a fanatic.

Shiva Rao has written to me a letter sending me an analysis of the existing constitution and trying to show how it might be amended to give effect to a national government. In my opinion legal difficulties can be easily got over. The real question is one of policy. The whole idea of forming a national government was already laid when Cripps came out to India nearly a month ago. I believe now we are sensibly nearer to the zero hour and any moment the storm in India may burst ...

Shiva Rao and probably some others think that it will do some good to call a meeting of the Standing Committee and of the co-signatories to the cable to Churchill here about the time that the Congress meets. I am not enthusiastic about it as I do not think it can lead to any good. I shall not, however, stand in your way if you are inclined to call any such meeting.

As regards the Non-Party Conference I doubt very much whether it will do any good to call a session of it at present. Cripps attitude was not at all friendly or hopeful. He only cared to get the consent of the Congress and the Muslim League and in my opinion he was more obsessed by Jinnah's opposition than by anything else. It must be remembered that they have followed the line that you can only deal with a party which can deliver goods and as the Non-Party Conference cannot deliver any goods it is out of court. Further you must remember that the Non-Party Conference was completely ignored by the Congress. The only man who cared to meet us was Rajagopalachari, but he is so different from the average Congressmen. I do not think, therefore, that it would do any good to call a meeting of the Non-Party Conference at this juncture....

219. Statement to the Press by M.C. Rajah Giving the Reasons Why the Depressed Classes League Rejected the Proposals, 22 April 1942
IAR, 1942, Vol. I, p. 256.

The Depressed Classes Views

'The proposals which Sir Stafford Cripps placed before us, as settled facts, if accepted by us, would undoubtedly place us under the yoke of our oppressors and blood and tears would be

our lot for ever', said Rao Bahadur M.C. Rajah, M.L.A., in a statement to the Press, issued from Poona on the 22nd April 1942, expressing his views on the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps.

Continuing, Rao Bahadur Rajah says that the Depressed Classes do not vie favourably the proposal of His Majesty's Government to set up a Constituent Assembly as the constitution-making body inasmuch as in this caste-ridden and sect-ridden country the Depressed Classes will have absolutely little or no chance, through such an electoral college as envisaged in the proposal, of returning genuine representatives of the community to the constitution-making body. It will only aid the Congress Party to secure a fully packed gathering in such a body.

'If the portfolio of Defence is also to be handed over to the Indians, that will be the last instrument placed in the hands of the Congress by His Majesty's Government to emasculate and strangle the Depressed Classes politically', he adds.

Proceeding Rao Bahadur Rajah says, 'Ninety per cent of India's wealth is reported to be her agricultural produce and 90 percent of India's tillers of the soil are the Depressed Classes. I feel that it is my duty to point out that India will march onwards to its promised goal, that it will progress forward to the extent to which its least favoured community, the Depressed Classes, march onward and progress. It is, therefore, necessary that if any further power devolved upon the Congress or the Muslims, it should be so devolved that the interests of all classes, however small, should be very carefully protected and safeguarded and their aspirations nourished and not smothered.'

Concluding, Rao Bahadur Rajah sounds a note of warning that no arrangement which the British Government might enter into with the Congress and other political parties without the consent of the Depressed Classes would be binding on the community and that if any such arrangement was made it would be strongly resented and stoutly resisted with all the means at their command.

220. 'Cripps Lifts Veil over Delhi Talks': Sir Stafford Cripps's Interview to the 'Free World Press' in London Explaining the Breakdown of the Negotiations

The Bombay Chronicle, 24 April 1942.

Representatives of the 'Free World Press' gave, Sir Stafford Cripps a warm welcome yesterday afternoon. He answered in cheerful and confident tone a barrage of questions on the recent negotiations in India.

Answering questions Sir S. Cripps said that Clause (E) of the draft declaration was deliberately left vague in order to give an opportunity for the widest discussion for arriving at a solution.

Asked whether the attitude of the Muslim League was not satisfactory Sir Cripps said the Muslim League expressed its opinion on the plan only after the Congress rejection (laughter) and I was not so much worried about the Muslim League's attitude.

When Sir S. Cripps asserted that formation of a government on the lines suggested by the Congress would have meant dictatorship of group forming the Government as they would not be responsible to the legislature nor to the Viceroy, Mr. William Mellor pointed out that such dictatorship existed in the formation of the present British Government.

Sir S. Cripps replied. 'Fortunately I am not debating here the basis of the formation of the British Government.'

When another journalist pointed out that the Congress leaders were not prepared to trust the Viceroy and Sir Stafford was not prepared to trust them, Sir S. Cripps replied: 'Oh, no. I trusted them. I say the Congress would not agree to discuss conventions with the Viceroy who was the appropriate authority. If he were to form the new Government it must form his duty and responsibility, not mine, to discuss with leaders what conventions they contemplated. I visualised that if the plan had been acceptable, the Viceroy would have next day sent for say Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah for consultation as to formation and personnel of the new Government. I offered to stay in India in that case in order to help to iron out any fresh difficulties that may then arise. But the Congress simply could not discuss with the Viceroy.'

Referring to Indian defence Sir S. Cripps said: 'I detected a sense of urgency in view of the Japanese menace among Indian leaders in my talks with them. All Indian leaders have assured me that they are going to co-operate with us to make the defence of India complete and successful. I hope you have seen Pandit Nehru's statements to the press to the Indian peoples on this. Sentiments similar to Nehru's have also been expressed by other leaders. I am more than satisfied that when the question of the actual defence of India comes good will come out of the recent negotiations. India's defences will be definitely good. In some parts of the country the Congress has already organized excellent A.R.P. services and also Home Guards units. They will be very useful. I do not see any reason why there should not be complete co-operation between non-official effort and the official one.'

221. 'Equal Partnership in Empire': L.S. Amery's Speech at the
Birmingham Unionist Association Commenting on the Likely
Course of the War and on the Cripps Mission, 24 April 1942
The Times of India, 25 April 1942.

The rejection of the War Cabinet's proposals had not weakened Britain's resolve that India shall yet find her honoured place as a free and equal member of the British Commonwealth declared Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India, at the annual meeting of the Birmingham Unionist Association tonight.

Indian soldiers, who had fought with great gallantry on many a field, would, Mr. Amery hoped, fight with equal valour in the defence of India, should the need arise.

'The next few weeks may be more fateful for the future of the world than any since Dunkirk', said Mr. Amery.

'They will decide whether our main enemy has shot his bolt and the end is in sight, or whether further years of uphill struggle lie before us,' he declared.

Referring to the loss of Malaya, Mr. Amery said that it had not been for lack of loyalty of its people or because of incompetence or want of sympathy on the part of our administrators.

'It is because we here, at home, failed sufficiently to honour the obligation for their defence implicit in our trusteeship.'

On the subject of India, Mr. Amery said: 'We have no reason to be other than proud of our past achievement; yet we have never thought that achievement as an end in itself. We have always regarded it as a stage, a stepping stone in India's advance towards Self-Government. For many years she has been advancing on that road.'

'Sir Stafford Cripps went out to prove beyond all doubt the sincerity of our intentions with regard to India's future independence and to invite Indian political leaders, on the strength

of the fullness and fairness of our pledges, to lay aside their differences with us and with one another, and co-operate in the Government of India as at present constituted.

‘I know of no other nation or Empire that would have made such an offer, nor has its rejection in any way weakened our resolution that India shall yet find her honoured place as a free and equal member in the British Commonwealth.’

After paying tribute to the gallantry of Indians ‘on many a field,’ Mr. Amery concluded: ‘They will I doubt not fight with equal valour in the defence of India itself if need should come.’

222. Subhash Chandra Bose’s Broadcast from the Azad Hind Radio on the Failure of the Mission, Making an Appeal to Indians to Deny All Help to the British, 25 April 1942

S.A. Ayer (ed.), *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, p. 131.

At this stage our struggle for the complete freedom of India, no power on earth can prevent me from arriving in your midst. All Indians should take advantage of the present trend of world events to achieve their objective.

If India follows Britain and takes her side, then she will meet the same doom as will fall upon Britain. I therefore warn my compatriots not to help Britain in any manner whatsoever.

Even a small child can see that the British Empire is going to be smashed to pieces. It has neither air power, nor naval power, nor a big army. Britain is trying to terrorize India into obedience. But just as she could not save herself in Africa, Europe and East Asia, so also, I assure you, she cannot do anything in India.

In such a critical situation it is the duty of every Indian to join hands with the enemies of Britain. Britain’s enemies are our allies.

Brothers, we will have to make great sacrifices in this struggle, because British imperialism will rather be prepared to loose England itself than to give up India. This is the strange logic of British imperialism.

At this juncture we must discharge our duty adequately. We cannot get freedom as a gift from Britain. We must win our freedom and independence by shedding our own blood at the altar of our motherland.

My compatriots, I will be informing you from time to time about the steps which our allies might take against Britain. My secret agents, who are operating throughout India, are regularly getting their orders over the radio in secret codes. Among the officials alone we have more than 50,000 agents. Apart from this there are innumerable fifth-columnists. They will strike at the opportune moment. When the overseas Indians advance, those lakhs and lakhs of Indians who are operating behind the enemy lines will join them. Therefore, my friends, you need not think that you are alone or without support in this struggle.

Muster all your strength and be ready to give the death-blow to Britain.

Inquilab Zindabad! Azad Hind Zindabad!



223. Jawaharlal Nehru's Interview to the Press, Responding to Sir Stafford Cripps's Press Conference Held in London, 25 April 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 238–40.

Question: What is your reaction to Sir Stafford Cripps's press conference at London on 22 April 1942?

Jawaharlal Nehru: A brief report of what Sir Stafford Cripps said at a press conference in London makes it quite clear to us that those in authority in England live in a world of their own, which has nothing to do with the reality in India. Into this imaginary world we who are realists refuse to enter. Sir Stafford Cripps, by what he said here and in London on behalf of the War Cabinet, has made it perfectly clear to us that we can never have any compromise with the British Government till it undergoes a complete change in its thinking and approach with regard to India. There is going to be no approach to Britain on our part. We shall face the consequences whatever they might be. For, on no account are we going to give up Indian freedom, Indian independence and Indian unity. We are not going to act as Viceroy's secretaries and advisers or in any other subordinate capacity. We shall only function as members of a free National Government with real powers.

Sir Stafford goes on laying emphasis on this that constitutional changes were impossible and that all political leaders realized this difficulty during war time. This is an amazing perversion of facts so far as the Congress is concerned. We think that everything is possible for those who want to act. But no doubt the people who are tied up with nineteenth century thought find it difficult to act. As a matter of fact, we told Sir Stafford that even if legal changes were not made, conventions could be accepted and assurances given that there would be no interference by the Viceroy and others in the working of the National Government. He refused to accept any such thing. So far as we are concerned, our course is perfectly clear. We shall submit neither to British imperialism nor to Japanese aggression. We may have to face disaster but we shall keep our self-respect and honour intact. Out of that very disaster a free and independent India will arise.

Q: What do you think about the resolution adopted at a meeting of the Madras Congress Legislature Party?

JN: The resolution adopted at the meeting of the Madras Congress Legislature Party greatly surprised me. I am surprised not only at its contents but at the fact that Mr. Rajagopalachari, a member of the Congress Working Committee, had sponsored it. At any time this would have been undesirable, but on the eve of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. meetings such action was extraordinary.

It is not usual for members of the Working Committee to criticize each other in public statements and therefore I do not wish to say more than this at this stage that I entirely disagree with the approach adopted in the resolution of the Madras Congress Legislature Party.

Q: What is your impression from your tour of Assam about the relief work being done for the refugees?

JN: The real problem is not so much on the Indian side as on the Burma side, and I think Indian doctors and relief workers should go both to the Burma end of the Manipur Road and to the point from where the evacuees come to India. At both these places relief workers and doctors should go because arrangements there are far from satisfactory and people are greatly harassed.

I think two things are necessary; doctors and the human element. These evacuees want some sympathy.

The question of food supply is of paramount importance. In an emergency when a large number of people have to be shifted from one place to another food is the basis of order. If there is no food it will lead to looting and enormous suffering. There must be some arrangement for this. But there was nothing in Burma.

What should be done is really for the experts' committees to consider in the light of the experience gained in Rangoon. The experts' committees should work out a scheme. They should seek cooperation of voluntary organizations and this will give them a popular backing.

Q: Does this mean that people should cooperate with the Government sponsored experts' committees?

JN: In a matter of this kind the only authority that can work is the state. It is very difficult for private organizations to organize this sort of work because rules and regulations will come in the way. But if the state does not function then private organizations should do all they can.

Q: What have you to say about those who have been evacuated from the districts of Bengal? They get food but what about employment?

JN: I do not think mere supply of food to these evacuated people in Bengal would do. An expert committee should deal with problems arising out of evacuation. Whenever there is a military necessity for the evacuation of a particular area a plan should be thought out previously, unless of course events force hands, and some alternative places should be provided to the people and compensation paid. But mere compensation would not do. Unless you provide them with some definite jobs or occupations I imagine the problem would remain insoluble. Government should provide for the occupation of the evacuees so that they may work and produce something. From any point of view irritating the civil population and making it discontented is bad. Suitable arrangements should be made so that people evacuated may feel that necessary arrangements have been made for them.

224. Cripps's Speech in the House of Commons Explaining the Breakdown of the Negotiations, 28 April 1942

IAR, 1942, Vol. I, pp. 257–65.

In the House of Commons on the 28th April 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Privy Seal, opened the debate on his mission to India. He said that he did not think that any one in this country need regret that the proposals for the solution of the problem of Self-Government for India were put forward. No one blamed His Majesty's Government for the failure to reach an agreement.

Sir Stafford Cripps added: 'I do not believe it is possible to find under the existing circumstances a fairer solution of the problem than the Government's declaration.'

Sir Stafford spoke as follows:

'When it was announced that I was to go to India with the Cabinet's proposals, this House was good enough to express its hopes that the mission might have a successful conclusion. That hope, was, I know, re-echoed by the great mass of the British people, by the Dominions and by a multitude of friends in Britain, India, the United States and elsewhere. Unfortunately, events have brought disappointment to these hopes, but I do not think anyone in this country need feel regretful that the proposals were put forward or need blame the British Government for the unfortunate fact of the failure to reach an agreement.'

Our Sincerity of Purpose Demonstrated

‘I should like to emphasise, at the outset, what I fear may prove rather a lengthy account of my mission, that, in my view, nothing but good will result both from the fact that the proposals were made and from the almost equally important fact that the War Cabinet sent one of its own members to discuss them in India with the leaders of Indian opinion (cheers). This method of presentation of the proposals has, I believe, demonstrated our sincerity of purpose (cheers).

‘Let me say a word or two regarding the background to my visit. Undoubtedly, the moment was a difficult one and a number of people have made comments on it. It is a pity that something on the same lines was not done earlier.’

‘There is much in the relationship of this country to India that could be criticized, analysed and argued about. But I do not propose to embark upon any such argument, as it is far more profitable, I believe to spend the time available in an examination of the present and future rather than in an attempt to allot blame for the past. It is a task we can very well leave to the historian.

Moment Chosen a Difficult One

‘The moment chosen was a difficult one for three main reasons. First, because of the imminent approach of the enemy to India’s shores. Japanese forces, by land and sea and air, were almost at the gates of India, and in such circumstances, many things that might have been usefully discussed and negotiated in more peaceful times could not be dealt with, because there was the overriding need to do everything in our power to carry out our duty to defend India from a foreign invader. Second, owing to the events in the Far Eastern theatre of war, accompanied by highly skilled, though grossly misleading, propaganda from Axis sources, an atmosphere of defeatism and anti-British sentiment was showing itself in certain sections of Indian opinion. Indians too, were uncertain of the future, and of the British Government’s view as to what that future should be. Third, with the approach of Self-Government or Dominion Status as a reality, communal differences of view as to the form of government suitable for the future in India had tended to become more definitely crystalised; and, especially the idea of two separate Indias, which even two years ago was little more than a vague vision of certain extremists, had come to be a definite and accepted programme of the most powerful Muslim political organization. There were, of course, other factors in the situation, but these were the principal ones, which increased the difficulties of obtaining any general understanding among the Indian peoples.

British Government’s Objective

‘It was the need for a clarification of the situation and for consolidation of Indian opinion in a favourable direction that impelled the British Government to decide that some positive steps must be taken and taken quickly. The British Government’s objective and hope was that we might use these very difficulties to bring together all the main leaders of Indian opinion for the double purpose of solving India’s future and reinforcing her defence against the invader threatening her shores. To accomplish this, two things were necessary, first, to give a clear, unequivocal promise regarding the future; second, to address an invitation to the various communal and political sections of Indian opinion to come together on the Viceroy’s Executive Council for the immediate prosecution of the war in India. This invitation would have to be made upon the basis of the offer regarding the future status of India. In the circumstances of the communal situation in India at the present time, it must be borne in mind that the future

is inevitably linked with the present. I am confident that no mere temporary arrangements could have been reached without some exposition of our future intentions.

Had we attempted to deal only with the present, we should immediately have been met with the demand for a clarification regarding the future. The difficulty of the communal situation has recently been emphasized by Mr. Gandhi in an article in the *Harijan* of April 19, where he makes the following statement. 'The statement of Independence is impossible until we have solved the communal tangle. We will never tackle this problem so long as either or both parties think Independence will or can come without any solution of the tangle. There are two ways of solving what has almost become insoluble—the royal way of non-violence or the way of violence.'

Conflicting Demands

'The British Government also had to deal with certain definite and often conflicting demands voiced by various leaders of important sections of Indian opinion. The Congress was known to have demanded repeatedly Independence for India and a Constituent Assembly which should devise the new constitution for the Indian people, and perhaps the most important of all, a single Indian Government for the whole of India, British India and Indian States together. The Muslim League, on the other hand, had adopted, as the main plank of its programme, the demand for Pakistan—a territory made up of that rather vague congerie of areas in which Muslims are in a majority. The more dispersed, but still important minority of the Depressed Classes desired specific protection against the adverse effect of the casts system, while the Sikhs, that brave fighting race (cheers) who have done and are doing so much to help Britain in the defence of India, desired some form of protection against majority rule by another community. There were many other minorities, religious, racial or social, who equally asked for special treatment, either along the lines of that already accorded under the 1935 Act or upon some more generous scale. Then, outside British India, were the Princes and their peoples, some Princes having special treaty rights arising, in many cases, over a century ago.'

'Among these conflicting claims it was necessary for the British Government to attempt to lay down some method whereby the Indian people could determine their own future—a method that would be acceptable to as many shades of opinion as possible. It was, of course, wholly consistent with the whole trend of earlier declarations, that if all sections of Indian opinion could agree upon some alternative method of Self-Determination, there would be no difficulty regarding its acceptance by the British Government. But in the past, when it had been left to the Indian communities to agree upon some manner of deciding their future, the British Government had been accused of relying upon the impossibility of an agreement in order to perpetuate their own domination over India. It was, therefore, necessary to devise a scheme whereby the refusal of a large minority to co-operate would not hold up the majority in their demand for Self-Government.

Clause Relating to Interim Period

'So much for the considerations upon which that part of the draft Declaration dealing with the future constitution of India was based and which resulted in the form in which it was made before the Indian leaders and in which it appears now in the White Paper. The second part of the draft Declaration was to deal with the immediate period before the new constitution could come into being. It was left in vague and general terms, but subject to one vital and precise

reservation. The reason for this form was that it was desired to leave open for discussion the way in which participation by Indian leaders in the councils of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations, to use the words of the document, could be made most effective and immediate. The single express reservation was as to Defence, and I shall return to that point in detail since it was one of the difficulties which arose during my discussions in Delhi.

‘Let me, now, say a word as to the manner of conducting these discussions. I was most anxious that there should be no suspicion whatever, that the British Government were hand-picking those whom I saw and consequently I asked the main organizations themselves to appoint those they wished to meet me. This they did, and they mostly expressed the wish that I should not interview any other than those of their Working Committees (laughter). Certain individuals I did see, such as Mr. Gandhi, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Joshi, Mr. Jayakar, the present or past Prime Ministers of all Provincial Governments, the Governors, and lastly but by no means least, members of the Viceroy’s Executive Council. Indeed, it was to this latter body that I first disclosed the details of the draft Declaration immediately upon my arrival in India and after seeing them, each one individually. It was to the same body that I first announced the failure of the agreement. The British Government are fully aware of the service that has been done by the members of the Viceroy’s Executive, and especially by those Indians, who have represented the interests of their peoples in that body. For that reason, I considered it necessary to go first and last to them.

Indian Press both Helpful and Fair

‘As the House knows, I kept the draft Declaration from publication for the first week of my stay in Delhi in order that during that period I might submit to all the principal Indian representative leaders personally. It then became clear that its contents were becoming generally known, and it was considered better that it should be published and this was done. The Indian Press were both helpful and fair in that they gave the fullest publicity to all I said to them in Press conferences, while of course expressing their own views, often very forcibly.

‘It is worthy of note that the skilful and analytical minds of the Indians sometimes lead them to seek out and emphasise every point as to which there may be doubt or as to which there may be disagreement, while they are apt to pass over points as to which there is agreement. This, sometimes, gives an appearance of much more keen and concentrated opposition than in fact exists. On the fundamental vital facts of their Self-Government and their Self-Determination there was, I believe, no single case of disagreement, not excluding representative of the European community whom I saw twice. Disagreement came upon the way in which Self-Determination should be exercised, and upon the transitory provision for the Government of India until the new constitution could come into force.

A Legacy of the Past

‘It must always be remembered that the one legacy of the past is the unwillingness of any considerable section of Indian opinion to accept any British offer unless the offer was also accepted by at least one of the two principal bodies—the Congress and the Muslim League. The state of internal opinion is such that, unless there is to be a large measure of acceptance of an offer, no minority cares to lay itself open to the accusation of being the creature of British Imperialism. It was, therefore, to be anticipated and we did anticipate that there would either be general acceptance or general rejection of the draft Declaration.

‘Before I pass to particular matters around which discussions developed, I must make clear one other matter relating to the negotiations. When I was sent to India by the War Cabinet, I was given full authority to arrive at a settlement within the terms of the draft Declaration. Its essentials had to be maintained—a matter which I myself regarded as of importance as it was the one and only way in which general, discursive and endless discussions could be avoided. But, I alone was responsible for what was put forward to Indian leaders by way of explanation and amplification of the details in the draft.

‘I naturally maintained close contact with the Viceroy. We met, in fact, every night during my stay and discussed the progress of events. I also maintained close contact with the Commander-in-Chief. Both were most helpful, but the responsibility for what was done was mine, not theirs. There was a tendency in some Indian quarters to suggest that they were responsible for the difficulties over Defence. Nothing could be further from the truth.

‘There is perhaps one other person to whom I should refer to avoid any misunderstanding since his name has been somewhat bandied about in the Press. It so happened by coincidence that while I was in New Delhi, the Economic Mission arrived from the United States, headed by Colonel Louis Johnson, representing directly in that matter President Roosevelt. He was entertained by the Viceroy on his first arrival, and while he was there, one of the Congress leaders asked to see him. After consulting the Viceroy and in accordance with the latter’s advice, he saw Pandit Nehru and in a most helpful conversation ascertained what at the time seemed to be the difficulties in the way of settlement. I also called upon Col. Johnson by way of courtesy on his arrival, and gave him as accurate a picture of the situation as I could. Thereafter, at my suggestion and in accordance with his own personal desire to be of any assistance he could, he had other interviews of great help in clarifying the situation. At no time did he act otherwise than in a purely personal capacity, and he like two or three of my good Indian friends, merely did his best to give what help he could. I am personally most grateful to him and I am sure the Congress leaders are similarly so. But, I wish to make it abundantly clear that there was no question of American intervention, but only the personal help of a very able and pleasant American citizen.

Congress Attitude to Dominion Status

‘Let me now come to the difficulties that arose. These were mostly concentrated into my discussions and correspondence with the Congress leaders. The Muslim League did not deliver me their objections until after they knew the result of my negotiations with the Congress. Questions outside the Congress objections which were raised by other sections I will deal with separately.

‘The difficulties fell under three heads, which will be observed from a perusal of the final resolution of the Congress and the letter from the Congress President in the White Paper. The first were those related to the method of determining the new Constitution, the second those relating to Defence and the third those relating to the general form of the interim government.

‘So far as the first category was concerned there were three objections. The first to the use of the word ‘Dominion’ and its definition in the opening paragraph of the draft Declaration. This was not a matter of prime importance. The Congress claim has been for Independence and they were afraid limitations included in the although, I think the leaders themselves appreciated the added words in Clause C of the draft Declaration which reads: The Treaty will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other

Member-States of the British Commonwealth. I think these words were accepted as making it perfectly clear that India could, in fact, leave the British Commonwealth of Nations should the Indian Government under the new constitution so desire it.

Provinces and Right of Non-Accession

‘The second objection was the most substantial one. It was as to the right of non-accession of the province after the new constitution had been decided by the constitution-making assembly. I would ask members to study the two resolutions of the Congress and the Muslim League and then to look at the draft Declaration. They will, I think, come to the conclusion that the draft Declaration does no more than what Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders have constantly stated that they were prepared to do—that is keep open the issue of Pakistan—and they also, I am sure, realize that the scheme of the draft Declaration is as fair a compromise as possible between two extreme views. It was the British Government’s duty to try and get an agreement by compromise, and not give either party all they wanted and then force it upon the other. I do not personally believe it possible to find, under existing circumstances, a fairer solution of the problem—a solution which aims at and provides for a single United India but which admits, if in the last resort parties cannot agree upon a form of constitution enabling them to work together, that the Muslims must be allowed, in those provinces where they can get a majority of the whole electorate, to vote those provinces out of the Union.

‘I should add one word of explanation regarding the proposal made for effecting this non-accession, and which does not appear in the document itself. The only ultimate test must be the wish of the actual majority of the adult male population of the province—that is to say, by a plebiscite. But it was not necessary to go to the trouble of a plebiscite where the result is a foregone conclusion. It was, therefore, suggested that every province should pass in its Lower House a formal vote of accession to the new Union, but if a minority of 40 per cent or more were against accession, then the minority should have the right to challenge a plebiscite, which should determine the matter by a simple majority. I desire to emphasise once again that the whole scheme was no rigid unchanging plan since it was expressly open to Indian communities to agree among themselves on a better alternative.

Position of Indian States

‘The third and last objection was as regards the position of Indian States. The Congress has now, for many years, interested itself in the lot of the people in the Indian States and has declared that, in any new Constitution, the people, as distinct from their autocratic Rulers, must have a say. They, therefore, protested not against the Indian States coming into the constitution-making authority, but against their representatives being nominated by the Rulers and not elected by the people. Unfortunately, in my view, representative institutions have not yet developed in a great majority of the Indian States, which must be dealt with as they are, if they are to be brought into the constitution-making authority—and that participation, I believe, every one desires including most of the States’ Rulers themselves.

‘If there was a machinery in the States whereby popular representatives could be chosen, the British Government would be only too pleased. Already, a small beginning has been made in some States by the more enlightened Rulers and their Dewans. I am certain this House would wish the British administration in India to do all it can to encourage and expedite that development. But, for the moment, we can only deal with the situation as it exists historically.

I need not trouble the House with all the complexities of the present constitutional position so far as the Indian States are concerned since, under the draft Declaration, the position would have been altered only so far as alteration was necessary to adjust the economic relationships of the new Indian Union or was caused by the action of the Indian States themselves in joining the new Union.

‘However, none of these three differences with the Congress Working Committee would have been decisive of negative result. For, though objecting and registering their protest, the Congress and the Muslim League and other bodies, such as, the Hindu Mahasabha, would have been prepared to co-operate, upon the immediate situation despite the making of a declaration by the British Government and that is probably the most one can expect under the circumstances. It would, in fact, have meant a solution, for the Self-Determination laid down in the draft would then have held the field with finality, subject only to the various communities and bodies in India arriving at some alternative method by agreement.

Minorities Other Than Muslims

‘There is one other matter with regard to the future to which I must refer. That is the position of the minorities such as the Depressed Classes, the Sikhs, Indian Christians and others. Each wished not unnaturally to have some special specific measure of protection included to cover its own case. But once Self-Determination has been promised to India, as proposed in the draft Declaration, it would be impossible for any British Government to impose terms in the new Indian Constitution. To do so would be a negation of Self-Determination. We have, however, in the past given undertakings to these minorities but in none of these cases other than that of the Muslims could these promises be dealt with by such device as non-accession. The minorities are not sufficiently localized or self-contained even in the case of the Sikhs, to make that possible, assuming that, upon other grounds, it was desirable. Some other solution therefore had to be found. I have not the slightest doubt that these minorities, all of whom would have been represented in the constitution-making body in accordance with their strength under the Communal Award, would have obtained ample protection under the constitution from the majority. Indeed, the forces operating within the constitution-making body would have tended, very much, in favour of the minorities. But in view of our pledges we could not leave the minorities to rely upon the alone. We therefore, inserted an express clause as to the Treaty covering minority protection which will be found in Paragraph 2 of the draft Declaration.

‘I should like to record here that neither the Congress nor the Muslim League expressed the slightest objection to this method of treating this subject. Minorities themselves were, of course, unable to say at this stage what form of protection they wished for, since until the form of the new constitution is known, nobody can state how within that form the minorities can best be protected. That would have had to be a matter for negotiation when the main lines of the constitution have been decided upon. The minorities were all, I think, anxious to come into a temporary Government had it been formed under the terms of the draft Declaration despite their criticism of the scheme as a whole as lacking more specific protection for their own interests.

Defence Control

‘I now pass to the second category of objection—that relating to Defence. This is a matter which is far more complicated than might appear on the face of it, and whereon there was a distinct

division of opinion amongst Indians themselves. Upon one thing, there was, I think, practical unanimity, and that was [that] the actual technical conduct of the war in India and the control of the armed forces for the fighting purposes must remain under the British commander-in-Chief. Every one realised that was mere common-sense. So, there was no difficulty regarding it. The difference of opinion came when the responsibilities at the Government of India as apart from those of the British Government were considered. These latter—that is the direct responsibilities of the British Government—would have been quite satisfactorily dealt with by having a representative Indian on the War Cabinet and the Pacific Council, both of which posts were offered to Indian leaders. It was first sought to clarify the position as between the British Government's direct responsibilities and those of the Government of India by rewording the final draft of Clause E into the form in which it now appears in the White Paper: 'During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, the British Government must inevitably bear responsibility for and retain the control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort. But the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India.' It was thought by those words to define as clearly as possible the division of responsibilities between the British Government and the Government of India. But, there is another cross division of responsibilities, much more difficult to define or separate out.

'The House will appreciate that, since the last war, the Commander-in-Chief in India has also held the post of Defence Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and his actual function and activities are divided between the two posts he holds. In fact, the Defence Secretariat and the Defence Department and staff are, from the mere fact that they have a common chief, all interlinked and interdependent in such a way as to make anything like a complete detailed separation of the functions of the Commander-in-Chief from those of the Defence Minister a very long and complicated matter, and one which, if it was attempted at such a critical moment at this, would throw into chaos the whole Defence organization in India.

Formula Evolved as Regards Defence Member

'Nevertheless, I took the view—and the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief agreed—it will be difficult for representative Indians on the Viceroy's Executive to rouse the people of India to their defence, unless they could say with justice that at least some part of Defence was the responsibility of a representative Indian and so of the Indian peoples. That was the point which was stressed by practically every one I interviewed including the Europeans. It was in an attempt to overcome this very real difficulty that I spent a good deal of my time at New Delhi. Various suggestions were made and several formula tried, until eventually one was worked out which became the final suggestion and is the only one with which I need now deal. It will be found on page 8 of the White Paper. Its object was quite simple, to allocate to the Commander-in-Chief, as War Member of the viceroy's Executive all administrative functions under the Government of India for the vital and efficient carrying on of the war—that is the relations of his General Staff, Naval Staff and Air Staff, whilst at the same time leaving to a representative Indian other functions of Defence, roughly corresponding to the list on page 8 of the White Paper under the heading. Annexe 1, together with a number of other very important functions, examples of which are given in Annexe 2 and which would in fact have made the new Defence Department one of the largest of all department in India.

'The House will, of course, realize that numerous other aspects of Defence, such as, Civil Defence, Communications, labour, etc. are already in the hands of Indian members of the Viceroy's Council and would have continued so, although personages might have been changed. It was impossible for the British Government to go further with safety (cheers) and no risk could be taken at such a moment as the present on so vital and immediate a matter as the Defence of India. Moreover I do not believe that the minorities, who contain some of the finest fighting elements in India, such as, the Panjabi Muslims and the Sikhs (cheers), would have consented at this stage to any further devolution of Defence responsibilities. This question did not actually arise, and the British Government were not able to go further. From the attitude of these minorities, I am confident they would not have consented to any further transfer in this field. I believe that this latest formula might have gained acceptance and at one moment, the Indian public seemed to think that a satisfactory solution had been found. I feel pretty sure, had the Congress leaders been able to accept finally the draft Declaration and enter the new Government, they would, upon the question of Defence, have been able to rally their Indian followers behind them. But it was not upon this issue that the final break came, though it was no doubt to some undefined extent involved in the breakdown.

Form of Interim Government

'The final question which was raised at my last and long meeting with the President of the Congress and Pandit Nehru, was as to the form of the temporary Government that might be in power until the end of the war and the coming into operation of the new constitution. I had, from the outset, made it clear to those whom I saw that it was not possible to make any constitutional change, except of the most insignificant kind, prior to the new constitution coming into operation as a result of the labours of the constitution-making assembly. This fact had been accepted by everyone without discussion as it was obvious, that it was a practical impossibility to start upon the discussion and framing of a new constitution at the present time. And, if such a discussion had been practicable and had been embarked upon, it would have occupied many months during which nothing could have been done by way of forming a new Government. Not only so, but any such alternation now would have been thought to prejudge the situation under the new constitution and would undoubtedly have met with opposition for that reason. Any such step, therefore, as recasting the constitution at the present time, was admittedly out of question. This was made quite clear in my letter to the President of the Congress, dated April 7, where I said: 'As the Working Committee have fully understood, it is impossible to make any change in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities.

Cabinet anxious to make a reality of the offer

'At the same time, the British Government were most anxious to make a reality of the offer under Clause (c) in any way practicable and consistent with the existing constitution. It was always possible, in such circumstance, by mutual understanding, with co-operation on both sides, to do much, especially when all are intent upon a common object so vital and all-embracing as the defence of India. Questions as to the formation of a new Government, how members of the Viceroy's Executive should be treated, how the business therein should be conducted, were of course essential matter for the Viceroy who had to carry on the Government of India and not for me as a member of the War Cabinet on a visit to India. I, therefore, told the Congress leaders that the general principle of participation or co-operation was laid down in paragraph

(c) of the Declaration, which stated that the British Government desired to invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principle sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, but the exact nature of its operation could only be decided as the result of discussions with the Viceroy, once Indian leaders had made up their minds that they could accept the draft Declaration upon other points. I stated that I was prepared to remain in India in such an event until the new Government was formed so that I could, if necessary, give any help required, but I could not bind the Viceroy to accept any particular arrangement for the conduct of his Executive. I informed them, after a discussion with the Viceroy, that immediately they decided to accept, he would call the principal leaders into consultation as to the formation of his new Government and that the only British members upon whom the new scheme insisted were the Viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief. I also pointed out to them if the conditions offered by the Viceroy were such that they could not accept them they would of course be as free as any other individuals who refused to take office or if they found they could not work in the Government, they would be free to resign, though naturally I hoped such a situation would never, in fact, arise. I see no other way myself in which the matter could have been arranged, but Congress leaders, as is shown by their final letters, apparently felt they would not have wide powers they thought necessary for their successful participation in the Government.

Issues on Which Final Break Came

‘As I pointed out in my broadcast from New Delhi, the position of complete power asked for by the Congress—and which was not demanded by any other section of opinion in India—would leave them in an impossible situation. The Executive Council, once chosen by the Viceroy, would not have been responsible to anyone but themselves or in a loose way perhaps to their political or communal organization, and there would have been no protection for any minorities. I am, quite confident none of the minorities would have accepted such a position and least of all the Muslims (cheers). It was on this issue that the final break came, followed as I had expected, by the rejection by the Muslim League for reasons precisely opposite of those by the Congress, but all concerned with the future rather than the present.

‘I regret and the British Government regret most profoundly that our efforts had failed, but do not let the House or the people of this country imagine that all the results of the War Cabinet’s action and my mission are on the debit side. There is much, I venture to think, on the credit side as well (cheers).

‘First, there is the advantage which accrues from the methods which have been adopted in this case. Instead of a somewhat vague declaration, put out without previous consultation with the leaders of Indian opinion, a precise and clear statement of a suggested solution has been discussed in India with all Indian leaders by a member of the War Cabinet sent there for that particular purpose. The fact that a member of the War Cabinet was sent in the stressed circumstances of today indicated the depth of the genuineness of our desire to reach a settlement of our outstanding difficulties.

‘Second, the content of the scheme has put, beyond all possibility of doubt or question that we desire to give India Self-Government at the earliest practicable moment and wish her to determine for herself the form that Government shall take. However great the criticism of the details may have been, no responsible Indian leader has challenged our sincerity upon that point. I think it accurate to say that this is the first time such an assertion could be truly made, and it is a most important and significant fact for our future relationships.

‘Thirdly, the whole of the discussions proceeded upon a basis of frank and mutual understanding and in an atmosphere of friendliness though the past was too strong for complete confidence to have been established. I have a feeling that we have taken a step forward especially as far as the younger elements in India are concerned, who are perhaps less influenced by the struggles and bitterness of the past than some of their older colleagues who still retain leadership.

India’s Determination to Defend Country

‘Finally, the whole discussion upon the issue of Defence has served to bring to the front the determination of the Indian people to defend their own country. Such statements as that by Pandit Nehru—a man of great determination—or the more recent attitude of Mr. Rajagopalachari, must do much to influence Indian opinion. The representative of the Muslim League, Mr. Jinnah and the leaders of other parties and communities, such as the Sikhs and Mahrattas, all expressed to me personally their readiness to stand with us in the defence of their country and do their utmost to help in every way. It is unfortunate that they do not find themselves in a position to give help as members of the Viceroy’s Executive Council, but it is good to know that each in his own way is prepared to assist. We have been brought closer to our Indian friends as fellow-defenders of their country, but we are not yet so close as we would wish or even as is necessary for the most effective defence of India.

‘Looking back at this historical incident and an important incident in the history of both our countries I feel no regret at the decisions taken by the British Government. I am convinced that they were just and we have done all we could in an admittedly difficult situation, to bring about agreement and better understanding between the two peoples of the two countries. It is in fact the past—exercising its influence upon all parties—that have proved too strong for us, and we must now leave the leaven of better understanding to work quietly towards an ultimate satisfactory solution of the political problem. If we are to do this, let us, at all costs, forego the transient satisfaction of blaming others.

Door Not Closed

‘I stated when I left India that in default of acceptance the draft Declaration must be considered as being withdrawn. But this does not and cannot close the door to that closer co-operation which we desire to see in the defence of India or to a solution of the problem of Self-Government after the war. It means that the British Government have done their best to make their contribution to a solution of the problem both in the substance of the draft Declaration and in the method of its presentation to the Indian people. For the time being, there is nothing further we can do. We must be patient, open-minded and willing to consider any proposals upon which Indian leaders can agree. But, for the moment, we must concentrate upon our duty—to do our utmost for the defence of India, a task in which our great American allies have generously come forward to offer their help which we, and Indians alike, welcome and appreciate. Many Indian leaders too will do their best to arouse the Indian people in their own defence and I hope by co-operation in defence we may move a step nearer to the solution of our problems.

‘I am certain that the members of this House and the British people and all well-wishers of Democracy, the world over, will continue to hope that, through successful resistance to brutal Japanese aggression, the Indian people will reach their goal of Self-Government and self-determination without internal strife and bitterness, and that thus India will emerge as a great equal of the free nations of the world, able to make her full contribution to the future of the new civilization after the victory of the Allied cause.’

225. Gordon Macdonald's Speech during the Debate on Cripps Mission in the House of Commons Contrasting Sir Stafford Cripps's Version with That of Jawaharlal Nehru and Being Critical of Lord Linlithgow, 28 April 1942

The Times of India, 29 April 1942.

In the debate on Sir S. Cripps's statement, Mr. Gordon Macdonald (Labour) described the mission as one of the 'greatest in the annals of history'. Mr. MacDonald took exception to the speech made by Lord Halifax in New York while Sir Stafford Cripps was still negotiating in India and asked whether Lord Halifax was speaking on his own responsibility and 'if so had the War Cabinet considered that and reprimanded him?'

Mr. MacDonald, however, did not suppose that Lord Halifax's speech caused the failure of the negotiations.

Mr. MacDonald said that he had received this morning an authoritative statement by Pandit Nehru on the breakdown of the negotiations and it was entirely different from the statement of Sir Stafford Cripps. He said: 'The proposals relating to the present are vague with such reservations regarding defence as to make them useless.'

Mr. MacDonald asserted that Pandit Nehru's statement put an entirely different complexion to what had happened, and asked the Secretary of State to reconsider the question of defence. 'I think the atmosphere has been improved,' Mr. MacDonald said, 'The initiative has been taken by this country and it would be a mistake to lose that initiative. We must take advantage of the improvement in the atmosphere.'

Mr. MacDonald was critical of the 'retrogressive and almost fossilised' tendencies of the India Office and of Mr. Amery, who he said, had given satisfaction in London but not in India. He also thought that it would be helpful if the Viceroy's term of office was not continued next time. 'I know that sometimes good policies fail because of a certain type of personality,' he remarked.

Sir George Schuster, former member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, hoped that everything possible would be done to get really representative Indians to come over and accept the offer of the Prime Minister to sit with them in their war councils and in the Pacific War Council. Everything possible should be done to get the Provincial Governments back in Office.

226. 'No Vetoing Power for Minorities': L.S. Amery's Speech during the Debate on Cripps Mission in the House of Commons Defending the Mission and Holding the Indians Responsible for Its Failure, 28 April 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 April 1942.

The Secretary of State for India Mr. Amery, winding up the debate in the Commons on India said: A just tribute has been paid to Sir Stafford Cripps for the conspicuous ability and sincerity and not the least, the good temper with which he discharged his difficult mission.

No more fitting ambassador could have been sent not only because of his position as member of the War Cabinet but also because his sending marked in a peculiar degree the unity of outlook and policy with regard to India which has been reached by the Government and

I might add which has been reached by Parliament and public opinion in this country. I say advisedly reached, because the mission and unanimous policy for which Sir Stafford Cripps endeavoured to secure acceptance were not a sudden improvisation to meet a critical external situation: The deathbed repentance of an unregenerate imperialist.

They were the natural, and indeed, the inevitable culmination of the steady development during these last few years of thought and feeling about India and India's political aspirations.

The Act of 1935 which was fiercely contested by us at the time was a great piece of constructive statesmanship which might by now have carried India far on the road towards complete freedom if it could have been implemented.

But we have all long since then moved beyond it. We no longer think in terms of India's progressive advance towards full control of her own destiny by stages decided here and under the constitution laid down by this house.

Of Her Own Making

We think instead in terms of India's inherent right to that freedom under a constitution of her own devising.

It is because Indian leaders have, I think, not fully realised hitherto or not fully believed in this change in our outlook and in its bearing upon their relations both to ourselves and to each other that the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps has I believe, been of such a permanent value for the future whatever its immediate outcome.

The primary task assigned to Sir Stafford Cripps was to remove all doubts as to the sincerity of our purpose.

We had already declared at the very outset, almost of the career of the present Government that we wished India to attain the same full freedom as is enjoyed by the Dominions and for that matter by ourselves and to do so as soon as possible after the war under a constitution of Indian devising.

That pledge was subject only to two stipulations. One stipulation was that the constitution should provide for the due fulfillment of the obligations imposed on us by our historic connection with India. The other was that the constitution should carry with it the acceptance of the principal elements in India's national life.

Baseless Fears

Indian political opinion was not prepared to believe that we really meant what we said.

It read into the stipulation about the obligation an intention to superimpose on the constitution conditions and safeguards which would in effect make it no longer the constitution of a free country, to take back with one hand what we professed to give with the other.

Again it read into the stipulation about agreement a cynical acquiescence in the indefinite continuance of disagreement and consequently of the present regime in India.

The main object of the draft declaration was to set these suspicions at rest.

The full meaning of the dominion independence was set out in the preamble in terms taken from the famous Balfour Declaration of 1926.

Moreover as Sir Stafford Cripps has already pointed out the provision in Section C for settling by treaty all matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from the British to Indian hands not only emphasized Indian equality of status but expressly laid down that the terms of the treaty should not restrict the power of the future Indian Union to decide

its relationship to the rest of the Empire; in other words to restrict its 'de facto' power to secede from the common wealth. How could we have gone further than that?

Again in order to meet the charge that we deliberately wished to postpone a settlement we put forward two suggestions.

One was that failing previous agreement between the leaders of Indian opinion and the principal communities on some other form of constitution making body we would set up one defined in Section D of the draft declaration immediately on the cessation of hostilities.

No Vetoing Powers

The other point is to answer the charge that we were giving minorities and more particularly the Moslem element a veto on all progress.

There was only one way of cutting the Gordian Knot—as Sir George Schuster called it—and that was to tell the majority that they were free to go ahead and achieve full freedom without waiting for the minority.

It was made equally clear to the Moslem minority—an element I might add of over 90 million people—that if they could not find the constitution of the new Indian union acceptable to themselves either at the outset or upon further reconsideration they were not to be denied the prospect of an equal freedom.

In this respect we were only following the familiar dominion precedent.

The Canadian Federation was originally formed by four only of the present provinces. The others joined in the next few years. On the other hand New Foundland has always remained outside.

The Australian Commonwealth and the South Africa Union afford similar examples of making special conditions for entering or else standing out altogether.

In the case of the India Act of 1935 it left the states free to say out but provided for the adhesion of a minimum number of states before the Federal provisions of the Act came into force.

This restrictive provision also was practically waived in the draft declaration.

'Our Ideal'

Our ideal undoubtedly remains a united all India including States as well as British India sufficiently united at any rate to present a common front to the outside world.

The unity which we have given India, the unity of law, of administrative procedure, of economic and transport policy, is an achievement of which we have every right to be proud but we would sooner see India divided and free than keep her various elements forever against us and against each other under a sense of impotent frustration.

The practical arguments for unity are undoubtedly overwhelming I have little doubt that they would prevail if it were not for the deep-seated fear of the Muslims to which the members for Horsham, Earl Winterton eloquently referred, that their distinctive culture and way of life would be at the mercy of the permanent Hindu majority.

The root of that fear which as the member for Aylesbury Sir Stanley Reed said we must banish, lies largely I believe in the assumption so often made that unity implies a central executive on the British model, an executive responsible in theory to a parliamentary majority but responsible perhaps in fact to a party caucus behind the majority.

In Other Countries

Yet our British system which we have developed in a homogenous country is not necessarily the best suited to so complex a structure as that of India. There is no sealed pattern of freedom.

The United States, Switzerland the former Germano–Austro–Hungarian Federation and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic may all supply useful precedents for Indian statesmanship to study.

What indeed is needed perhaps even more than new constitutional methods is a new spirit of compromise. It is by making Indian Statesmen conscious that the solution of the problem is their own undivided responsibility and not ours that both the right methods and the right spirit are most likely to emerge.

Our main concern was to indicate a solution for the future which left no doubt as to our own intentions and we struck as fair a balance between the contending points of view as it was possible to attain.

We did so because it was only in the light of a solution recognised as essentially sincere and fair even if not wholly acceptable to any one section that there could be any hope of co-operation in the present of Indian political leaders either with ourselves or with each other to face the crisis in front of India.

Even so it could only be a question of co-operation, effective participation and active and constructive help—to quote the language of the draft declaration—within the existing constitution.

It could not be a question of control free from the ultimate responsibility of Parliament here exercised there through the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. It could not be that both for practical reasons which have been given in connection with defence by my Right Honourable friend but above all the reason that there was no agreement as to who should exercise that control.

Demand for National Govt.

The demand for National Government put forward by the Congress has been repeated in more than one speech in the House. But such a National Government would have been responsible in the last resort neither to Parliament here under the existing constitution or to an agreed and what the member for Walsall called a fairly balanced constitution in India but only to its own majority—a majority presumably of Congress or at any rate of Hindus.

That demand whether made by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his colleagues or by the Congress was one thing which the Muslims and other minorities were determined at all costs to reject.

They were and are convinced that such a Government would in fact prejudice the whole future situation to their detriment. There was therefore never any question in our view of conceding that demand because it was in fact, if not in intention, a demand which precluded all agreed co-operation in India....

Not an Inch

Sir Stafford Cripps has given the House a full and most lucid account of his negotiations and of the reason for their breakdown. I will not cover the ground again. There is only one point I would add but it is perhaps a most significant and illuminating point in the whole story.

Sir Stafford Cripps flew many thousands of miles to meet Indian leaders in order to arrive at an agreement with them. Indian leaders in Delhi moved not one step to meet each other either without him or in his presence.

They made no attempt to reach an agreement among themselves. The Congress demand for national Government was declared by its president to be the unanimous demand of the Indian people. Why then was no attempt made to afford evidence of the unanimity by bringing forward in concert with the Moslem league and other parties an agreed proposal? For the simple reason that it could not have been done.

That is an aspect of the situation which we must face. We do not do so for the purpose of imputing blame to any Indian section. The member for Walsall very truly said that it is by no means an easy matter for men whose whole life has been concentrated in opposition to each other to come to a speedy agreement.

Even in this house we had to be at war for many months before a national Government was secured. We have got to face this aspect, however, in order to realise why it was impossible for Sir Stafford Cripps to met the demand for a so-called national Government.

While the Cripps mission failed of its immediate object in the wider sense, I believe, it has been very far from failure.

It has been if I may adopt an epigram of his own prologue of an old chapter in which contending elements in India have attempted to attain their ends by belabouring His Majesty's Government and also to the prologue of a new chapter in which the Indians are beginning to realise that the key to India problems is in their own hands.

C.R.'s Move

Since Sir Stafford Cripps left India Mr. Gandhi has summed up the point quoted by Sir Stafford Cripps in a striking passage in which he has declared that the attainment of independence was impossible until Indians have themselves solved the communal tangle.

The declaration is, I think, a sufficient answer to the speeches which have been made suggesting that it is we who have exaggerated if not invented the communal issue.

[Question from a member]: Is Government accepting all that Mr. Gandhi says?

Amery: I do because he says what I have spent two years in saying. Even more important as evidence of the new approach are the resolutions which were passed at the statesmanlike instigation of Mr. Rajagopalachariar, ex-premier of Madras, by the Congress members of the Madras Legislature.

By the First of these resolution the All India Congress was urged to waive its objections to the Moslem League claim for separation if eventually persisted in, for the sake of removing every obstacle from the way of establishing a national administration.

By the second, the nation all-India Congress Committee was requested to permit an approach to the Moslem League with a view to the re-establishment of popular Government in the Madras Province.

It would appear that this patriotic and courageous declaration has met with the disapproval of the Congress President and Pandit Nehru.

It may be that their attitude will be sustained by the All-India Committee which is to meet in the next few days.

It would never have been taken but for the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps.

[Question from a member]: How many were present when the resolution was passed? Only 32 out of 200 passed that resolution.

Amery: No, 39 out of 44 of them. At any rate will anybody suggest that it was an undesirable resolution or that the desire on the part of Congress members to come to reasonable terms with

their Moslem colleagues to re-establish a free Government in their province first and make progress with a free Government for India was wrong?

If only three had support I should honour them for doing so.

It has been asked what is precisely meant by the withdrawal of the draft declaration.

What we have certainly not withdrawn is our main object and purpose, namely that India should as soon as possible obtain full freedom under constitutional arrangements of her own devising and suited to her own peculiar conditions.

On the other hand the particular methods which we suggest for arriving at a constitutional settlement, more particularly the present provincial basis both for setting up a constitution making assembly and for non-accession is not meeting with sufficient support for us to press it further.

It may be that alternative methods might arise which might form a better basis for the definition of boundaries and might give representation for smaller elements such as Sikhs whose natural aspirations we appreciate. It is for Indians themselves to improve on our suggestion if they can.

As regards the interim situation the particular proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps in order to secure the wholehearted co-operation of the Congress as well as the other political parties have of course lapsed. But the Viceroy will no doubt always be willing to consider practical suggestions within the framework of suggestion of the draft declaration put forward by responsible party leaders....

It is indeed upon the agreement and initiative of Indian party leaders that any further advance must depend.

The member for Walsall raised the question of the desirability of re-establishing self-Government in those provinces in which the Congress has refused to carry it on. That, of course is most desirable. It would have been a natural consequence of the success of the Cripps mission. The door is open now and remains open.

[Question from a member]: What exactly did the door remains open, mean? Suppose the Congress Party in those very provinces agreed themselves to carry on self-Government, would the British Government agree?

Mr. Amery: Yes, if in any of those provinces the Congress Party are prepared to assume the responsibilities of Government and give that help to the prosecution of the war which they have declared they wished to give, we are only too ready to let them resume office under those conditions.

Meanwhile the Government of India must get on with the immediate task before it.

I must make it quite clear that our anxiety to secure a wider measure of active cooperation from the political parties in India by sending our Sir Stafford Cripps in no way implies any lack of confidence in the ability or energy of the executive Government of India.

On the contrary his Majesty's Government have the most complete confidence in the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow who has handled continuously a difficult situation with prudent wisdom and whose vigorous initiative has been invaluable in everything bearing on the conduct of the war.

That confidence extends no less to the existing Executive Council. Indian members who form the majority of that Council are men of high ability and experience in active politics in administration and business. Their patriotic willingness to stand aside for others who might command a greater measure of organised political support is something that we have sincerely

appreciated as they, I feel sure, recognise the value we attach to their continued service to India at this critical time.

What I have said of the Indian members applies equally to the European members and indeed to the whole of the administrative services, Indian and British, which have wrestled so ably with the innumerable problems created by war conditions.

India Office Issue

[Some members of the House]... have made the suggestion that the work of India Office might be transferred to the Dominion office.

I think that suggestion is based upon a very insufficient realisation of the work of the India Office. The main work of the India Office does not consist in controlling, restricting and interfering with India. Its main work is that of an agency in this country on behalf of Government.

The Government of India have in peace and even more in war a great army to maintain, part of it directly drawn from this country and largely equipped from this country.

In order to secure from the Government of this country and to give what India needs she requires a very considerable military staff. India has neighbours which made the foreign policy of this country a matter of vital interest to her. From that point of view again she has to have considerable staff here to keep in touch with the Foreign Office and see that India's interests are not neglected.

Further there is a vast range of economic problems which vitally concern India and with regard to which it is important to her to see that the policy of this country does not neglect Indian interests.

All these matters, if India were a self-governing Dominion, would still have to be carried on, but carried on by an enlarged High Commissioner's Office like the office of Australia House and Canada House.

But as long as the ultimate responsibility in these matters rests with the Secretary of State they must be conducted under his immediate eye and he is still what the High Commissioners for Dominions are in that sphere at any rate the chief agent and the representative of the Government of India and of the interest of India.

[Question from a member]: This is a very important point. Is this being put forward as conclusive argument? Are we to understand that the High Commissioner should not do what is now being done by the Secretary of State? Would it not be right to remove the root cause of all the trouble, mistrust and suspicion and so give an indication of our sincerity?

Amery: The reason is that the Dominions Office which deals with only diplomatic and not administrative problems could handle the problem of India if other matters were handed over to a representative of the Indian Dominion Government.

Meanwhile to make an unreal pretence administratively impossible, that we were really changing the situation, would be a mere sham and camouflage which would fail to impress any one.

[Question]: Has not India a High Commissioner here?

Amery: Yes, for those economic purposes which are entirely within the discretion of the Government and legislature of India and they cover a wide field but they do not cover the field of those matters which must for the time being still be the responsibility of the Secretary of State.

To come back to India we rely also not less upon the Command-in-Chief, Sir Archibald Wavell, and upon all ranks in the fighting services of India.

The Cripps Mission whatever else it has done [interrupted by a member with a question on the speech by Lord Halifax on Cripps Mission while the negotiations were still on.]

Amery: I will answer that point now. Lord Halifax spoke not upon any instructions from here but with an intimate experience acquired by many years as Viceroy—the Viceroy who was more sympathetic to the Congress and more closely in touch with it than any other Viceroy has been and if he used phrases which might possibly have touched Congress susceptibilities ...

[Question]: When delicate negotiations were going on?

Mr. Amery: Well I do not think the Honourable member would find that we were as sensitive as that about some of the phrases used through out these negotiations in India quarters.

But with regards to the Cripps Mission whatever else it has done much as time will show, it has at any rate had one immediate effect.

It has brought home to the public here and elsewhere something of the complex character of Indian political structure and of the inherent obstacles to any simple off hand solution. They are not obstacles which could discourage us in our purpose.

We have behind us a record of achievement in building up the present structure of the Indian empire of which we can well afford to be proud.

If we can achieve the transfer to Indian shoulders of the responsibilities for the maintenance of that fabric and if we can play our part in the transformation of the administrative machine into a free and self-reliant national life we shall have even better reason for pride.

It is not in any spirit of apology for our own past that we should approach this great problem. Rather we should approach it with abundant faith in ourselves, in the principles for which we stand and in the vision of Free Nations transcending all differences of race or creed and linking together east and west in the common cause of human progress.

It is those same principles and to that same vision that we hope by sincerity, by goodwill—nay patience it must be—to win the free and unfettered allegiance of our Indian fellow citizens.

For the moment if I may quote the words used in this House by Burke, of the difficulties of the Indian situation, in his diary. ‘There we are and we must do the best we can in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duties.’

227. T.B. Saprú's Statement on the Debate in the House of Commons on the Cripps Mission, 28 April 1942

The Times of India, 29 April 1942.

‘On the eve of the Parliamentary debate on the Cripps mission I would like to say a few words,’ says Sir T.B. Saprú in a statement, ‘The outstanding fact of the situation is that the deadlock which Sir Stafford Cripps came out to solve continues as it was and his visit has left behind a sense of disappointment and frustration.

‘I was in Delhi up to April 5. I was aware that the Mahatma had taken a very strong line against the Cripps proposals and when this is borne in mind it must be admitted that the line taken by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on behalf of the Congress was, on the whole, much more moderate than one was entitled to expect.

‘I refuse to believe the story which has been put forward in certain quarters that the political parties concerned were not willing to assume responsibility. Whatever may be said by some unthinking persons about the danger of any Indian Cabinet entering directly into peace negotiations with Japan, I refuse to believe that men who would assume responsibility as a result

of a settlement with the British Government would betray their trust. These are extraneous factors of prejudice which I think should be eliminated from discussion of the entire subject.

‘It is now being urged that nothing more can be done by the British Government and that the initiative must now come from Indian political parties. This seems to me to be moving in a vicious circle.’

228. Letter from L.S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow, 29 April 1942

Linlithgow Papers, Vol. 11, NMML.

The India debate is happily over and I only hope that you may be spared the repercussion of further debates and speeches on India from this end. Cripps original speech contained several matters which worried me, e.g., his obsession with the idea that all relations with the crown would cease in the case of princes adhering to the union; a passage referring to conventions on the parallel of what had happened in the provinces, &c. but after some discussion he took them all out and also added a passage about your Executive. What I don't think he understands is that his proposals involved a great sacrifice for the members of your Executive and that it was not enough merely to tell them, before others, what he was doing or had failed to do. However, I hope I put that right in my speeches, as well as emphasizing the Government's confidence in yourself. I hope also that what I said about the future will have eased things for the Sikhs without worrying Jinnah, and that my references to the open door for the present gave away nothing that you wished preserved.

2. I fully realise the difficulty of the position in which you were placed, in any case by the mere fact of Cripps' visit, and additionally by his methods. It certainly was a complete surprise to us here that he seems to have assumed that we envisaged the complete Indianisation of the Executive apart from the Commander-in-Chief and yourself. As I tried to correct the position in my speech, it is participation we invited, which clearly means a part and not the whole, and certainly does not mean control. I doubt whether, in his eagerness for a settlement of some sort, on top of his natural inclinations, he was really a match for Nehru and Azad. I expect he used phrases like 'National Government' in the sense that every section in India would be represented, and that they took good care at the time not to ask him what he meant in order to have it up their sleeve afterwards.

3. As you know, Nehru has an agent here, Krishna Menon, an indefatigable worker on the extreme Congress line with a tame clientele among certain members of the Labour Party like Cove and Sorensen and even to some extent Gordon Macdonald, who was put up as the party's spokesman yesterday. He has been priming them hard with certain telegrams of Nehru's, telegrams they used freely in yesterday's debate taking

good care not to quote other passages ...

showing Nehru's complete intransigence

and bitterness. Menon has even seen Cripps since he came back, but I think has not got much change out of him.

4. As for the debate itself, Cripps' statement was the clear matter of fact exposition of Counsel, with no attempt at background or colouring, and to my mind implying a certain apology for our own past. Otherwise I thought it very good and it satisfied all except a few of the ones I have already referred to. These were led off by Gordon Macdonald, who incidentally wished to get rid of both of us, and made a quite unnecessary fuss about Halifax's recent speech.

It really is a little steep that we should take unlimited abuse from Congress lying down, but should not even be allowed to say that their attitude is non-co-operative! For the rest, the debate was uninspiring. Winterton and Schuster were quite helpful and so, on the whole, was Reed; but none of them made anything that could be called a real contribution to the debate. My own winding-up went down reasonably well, but of course was mainly directed with an eye on the one hand to America and on the other to getting things into proper perspective from your point of view. It is to the latter, of course, that I attach most importance, and can only hope that I have helped you and not let you in for fresh trouble in any direction.

5. Of course, the incorrigible appeasers—mostly people who have denounced appeasement in foreign affairs as the worst of all crimes—are already saying that we must run after Congress at once in supplication. Possibly the results of the All-India Congress Committee in the next few days may sober them for a little. But in the main they are incorrigible for the simple reason that admitting the facts of the situation spoils the kind of speeches they have been accustomed to make and the articles they have been accustomed to write, and it is too much intellectual trouble to change their ways. The same, I suspect, will be true before long of a great many American writers. All the same, I dare say we have gained at any rate a residue of most intelligent thinking on India, and it may be of real value that Cripps should have learnt as much as I think he has learnt. Personally, I believe much the best line would have been, not merely to say that we leave it to them to approach us, but to say definitely that they have missed the bus and that we cannot be bothered with them till the war is over. That would at any rate at once give enhanced authority to your existing Executive, as well as to the Army and the Civil Service. However, I think I said the next best thing by suggesting that it is in effect only in the case of an agreed approach that there would be anything doing.

6. Meanwhile, I shall look forward with interest to your immediate plans for reconstituting the Executive. You have had before you the possible difficulty of Benthall's private interests, but I gather you think that is all right. I am sure you will do well to bring in Ambedkar. More particularly I believe it would be a wise thing, if you can find the right man to carry on with the separation of Defence Member and War Member. If he could be spared from the Punjab, I have no doubt that Sikander would be the right person. If not, I wonder whether Firoz may not do? He has at any rate a good deal of energy and an effective way of talking to people. A bolder experiment might be to bring in a good State Dewan or even a Prince. The Army would, I think, certainly like that and I dare say it would appeal to the general population as well, if we have to go at them in spite of Congress. However, I won't speculate on this theme as I shall be getting your telegrams before this reaches you. This is to catch tomorrow's immediate mail, but I believe there is one on the following day, so I will not attempt to deal with any further matters.

All my best wishes to you.

229. Letter from L.S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow with Comments in the Margins by Lord Linlithgow Sharing Impressions about the Mission, 30 April 1942

Linlithgow Paper, Vol. 11, NMML.

I have just received your telegram about the Debate and am glad you think it went well. I realize that you would have preferred Cripps not to mention the fact that he had offered all

the places except the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief, but I think that was pretty clear from the White Paper itself, and in any case I did what I could to protect that position by saying that his particular proposals, aimed at securing the wholehearted support of Congress and of other parties, had lapsed. I don't see, therefore, that you are bound by it in the case, say, of Rajagopalachari, Jinnah, & C., coming with a combination which did not include the whole of Congress, but still justified you in going ahead. There is also the point which Simon made in yesterday's debate in the Lords (which also went very well) that the presence of British Members on the Council is essential if the Muslims are not to insist on equal representation with the Hindus. I certainly see no reason why you should not go ahead now with your original plans for the expansion of the Council on existing lines, including Benthall. But I do think there is a lot to be said, as I said in my letter yesterday, for creating an Indian Defence Member if you can find the right man.

Meanwhile, what matters most is to get on with the war. Today's news from Burma is pretty bad and means, I suppose, that the Burma Road will be closed, and the bulk of our forces, including a good part of the Chinese forces, pushed back towards Assam. I don't suppose the Japanese will want to do more than isolate China and that therefore the next move against India may come pretty quickly, whatever form it takes. If only you had more aeroplanes. On this point Winston is, I fear, very determined at all costs to honour our obligations in this matter to Russia, whereas I would think it quite justified to divert at any rate a portion of our Russian promises for a time to India. A hundred machines in India would be a much greater proportionate gain to our defence there and help to balance our ground forces, than they would in Russia. Also, I have an uncomfortable feeling that a good deal of our stuff is never properly used by the Russians, who are so suspicious that they won't let our experts go near any of their people once the machines have been handed over.

I am sorry that Louis Johnson seems to have been talking rather condescendingly about India's war effort. All these Americans, whether newspaper correspondents or otherwise, are apt to be over-hasty in their judgments, thinking that the East is exactly like the West and can move as fast as the Americans move—or, rather, as they say they are going to move, which is a very different thing. I wonder very much whether any body of Americans could have done as much with the creation and equipment of the Indian Army as General Headquarters, Jenkins, Wood, Armitage, & C., have done under your leadership? Also, there is the very natural American instinct to console themselves for their own failures by being over-critical of us.

However, it is possible that there may be something in it and that our whole machine, as spread over India, has become itself somewhat oriental in its notions of time and energy. I wonder what you really think about that? Winston has just sent me a letter which Roosevelt received from an American correspondent—supposed to be a very reliable one—damning everything in Burma to heaps, from Dorman-Smith downwards. I wonder what sort of reports have reached you as to the general running of that show, both on the civil and on the military side? My own impression is that Dorman-Smith has done very well indeed and that the soldiers have put up as good a fight as conditions have allowed.

I see you have had to put a stopper on the Congress resolutions on refugees from Burma. I have no doubt Nehru is up to mischief going up to Assam and that their one idea is to make

No! No! It is H.M.G. that has held us back, & I can prove it at any time I am invited to do so.

L.

capital out of the affair. I have got questions on it for next week, but shall no doubt before then have had telegrams from you about it.

My afternoon paper tells me that Rajagopalachari has resigned from the Committee. I wonder whether he will carry with him enough supporters in his own Province to enable him to set up a coalition government in Madras? That would be an excellent thing if it could come about. But I somehow doubt his carrying enough support even for that, let alone for the bigger purpose of a coalition government at the Centre.

He has already [lost?] 1 in every 2 of his supporters in his own Province, & he will have his work cut out to make anything constructive out of his apostasy for many a day to come.

L.

I am not altogether sure about the reactions to your appointing Benthall. The Cabinet may think it a slamming of the door. It would be less so, of course, if accompanied by the appointment of an Indian Defence Minister and Provincial Advisers.

230. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to Evelyn Wood Explaining His Inability to Be Associated with the War Campaign, 1 May 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 240-1.

My dear Evelyn,

I have your three letters. I am acknowledging them briefly as I am full of work at present. I do not think you quite appreciate my position or the position of the Congress. We cannot possibly participate in any propaganda on behalf of the Government. I am distressed at my name and my picture being used in Government publicity. The situation is far more serious than our complaisant friends Stafford Cripps and company realize. Cripps has effectively succeeded in creating a tremendous revulsion of feeling against the British Government and all its works in India.

He chooses to live in a paradise of his own creation and honourable members of parliament indulge in the most foolish of platitudes. You may have some idea of how things are fashioning by reading the proceedings of the A.I.C.C. Even that will only give you a faint idea.

I have no programme and do not know where I will be on any particular day. There is no chance of my going to Bombay for some time at least.

231. Broadcast by Sir Stafford Cripps Summarizing the Entire Mission, 3 May 1942

The Times of India, 4 May 1942.

Sir Stafford Cripps, the Lord Privy Seal in a broadcast to night said:

'I expect most of you will have seen in the newspapers the results of my 20,000 mile journey to India and have read the report of my mission which I gave to the House of Commons. Let me summarise how matters stand.'

The British Government have finally and fully made clear their intention that India should have complete freedom and self-Government the moment the war is over and as soon as the Indians can themselves frame a new constitution. That is really a big thing. We have made clear to the world what I am sure is the desire of everyone.

Then we proposed what we thought was the best way the Indians could set about framing that new constitution, but we stated if they did not agree with the method suggested we would willingly consent to any alternative upon which the Indians agreed among themselves. There were many differences of opinion concerning these suggestions so much so that it seemed to me that our plan just about hit off a happy mean between the various differing views which were put forward.

Real Difficulty

But the real difficulty arose over the provisions for the Government of India in the Interim period, that is, during the war and before the new Constitution can be framed. We could not start remaking the Indian Constitution at this critical moment, nor would it be of any use in the immediate situation if we tried because it would take many months to do even if we ever reach an agreement. So we invited representative leaders of Indian opinion to join in the existing Government of India, that is the Viceroy's Executive Council and to organize in partnership with us the defence of India which is one great task that confronts us and the Indians alike at this moment.

No agreement was reached because some of the important elements in India wanted the British Government to go further in handing over complete power to India's majority community than we considered possible consistently with our obligations, to defend India and our promises to the great communal minorities.

Apart from these considerations we had no reservations as to the amount of power we would transfer; that was made quite clear by our offer to transfer power completely the moment hostilities ended.

'I am very sorry that our efforts did not succeed as hoped. Nevertheless, I am sure it is all to the good that we should have made our intentions perfectly plain and that there should no longer be any questions concerning complete and absolute freedom of India after the war. But I want you to realize that our attempt to find a solution of the Indian problem is essentially part of our general working out of many questions which the war has forced upon our consideration. This was is not a mere struggle for territory or even for economic advantages to be won by this or that country. It is something more than that.

The New Spirit

It is natural, therefore, as part of our war effort that we should fight not only against the Nazi and Fascist power, but also for these things which are the very opposite of Nazi and Fascist aims. By our own professions we have condemned old inequalities whether between ourselves and the so called subject races or between one class and another in our own country. This new spirit must find a practical expression in our international relations and in the economic and social field at home.

We must, therefore, begin to work out its implications coolly and scientifically so that we may apply it in action when the time for reconstruction comes after our victory. There must be after this war none of these gross inequalities that were the aftermath of the last war, none of that disgraceful contrast of great poverty and great wealth and no vast bands of heroic defenders of our country walking the streets in a vain search for livelihood.

After prodigious expense of life and wealth which this war will have entailed: scourges of unemployment, malnutrition and unnecessary ill-health and waste of human ability which

our educational and social system has permitted in the past will no longer be tolerated. As comrades we have without thought of class or crew fought the war. As comrades too we must build a happier and more abiding peace.'

Moment to Strike Come

'The moment to strike is approaching', said Sir Stafford Cripps in a preface to the post-script to his broadcast, sending a message to the Poles on this their National Day. 'They and we will be victorious and by that victory a strong, vigorous and independent Poland will be re-established and will play her full part in the reconstruction of the world. We say to them, "Stand Firm". We send to the Polish people, how in dire suffering, our admiration for their courage and their long drawn out determination to resist.'

232. Statement to the Press by Chimanlal Setalvad Criticizing Sir Stafford Cripps for the Failure of the Mission, and Congress's Stand at the AICC Session at Allahabad

The Bombay Chronicle, 8 May 1942.

The negotiations that took place between the Congress Executive and Sir Stafford Cripps made it perfectly clear that if the Congress terms had been accepted, the Congress was prepared to throw itself wholeheartedly in the prosecution of the war. It is noteworthy that the negotiations broke down on the controversy about defence and the character of the interim Government during the war. The Congress was insisting on getting effective control of the Defence Department in order to be able efficiently to prosecute the war. This is very apparent from the resolution of the Working Committee and the correspondence between the Congress President and Sir Stafford Cripps.

After the failure of the Cripps Mission, the Congress leaders openly advocated active resistance to the enemy. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made stirring appeals to his countrymen in this behalf and so did others. Pandit Nehru asked the people to carry on guerilla warfare. Then suddenly comes the resolution of the A.I.C.C. of 1st May 1942 which calls upon the people of India to resist the enemy only by offering non-violent non-co-operation.

It is not clear whether the Congress is in favour of their country-men assisting the war effort by joining the armed forces and by producing the necessary war materials.

A Grave Matter

If it means to say that people should do nothing for the war effort except to non-cooperate non-violently with the enemy, it is indeed a very grave matter. It means non-co-operation with the British Government even in the defence of India itself. If it means to advise Indians to sit with folded hands and do nothing actively in support of the war effort, such advice is bound to have very adverse effect on the safety of the country by seriously lowering the morale of the people.

As I have often said the charge sheet of grievances that India can legitimately produce against England is grave and long, but to refuse to co-operate actively with the British Government in defending the country when the enemy is at our very door, is absolutely suicidal. We are not forgetting our difference with England. There will be time enough to settle them after the war is won. If the war is not won, the independence and freedom of India will recede into the

background for how long a time one does not know. It is for our own sake now and not that of England that Indians must actively participate in the war effort.

Agrees with 'C.R.'

I entirely agree with Mr. C. Rajagopalachari that the Congress must arrive at a settlement with the Muslim League though the method adopted by him for that purpose was rather unfortunate. It is surprising that the necessity of such a settlement has dawned upon Congressmen so late. When the present constitution came into operation and the Congress won at the poll, if the Congress had treated the Muslims, Depressed Classes and other minorities in the right spirit and had given them proper share in the Government of the country, no trouble would have arisen and the cry of Pakistan would never have been raised.

I agree with Mr. Rajagopalachari that settlement with the Muslim League is urgently required. The Congress President has said that he was prepared to appoint five representatives of the Congress to meet a similar number of Muslim League representatives to discuss matters. It is, however, astonishing that when the Cripps negotiations were going on for three weeks in Delhi, and the Muslim League and Congress Executives were there and they separately met Sir Stafford Cripps dozens of times, no attempt was made by either the one or the other to put their heads together and arrive at an agreed formula to be put before Sir Stafford.

The passing of Mr. Jagat Narain Lal's resolution has, I am afraid made impossible any negotiations with the Muslim League.

233. 'India Debate': Editorial Analyzing the Mission in the Light of Sir Stafford Cripps's Statement in the House of Commons

Jam-e-Jamshed (Bombay), 30 April 1942.

The review of his mission given by Sir Stafford Cripps in the Commons, initiating the debate on India deals with the political background to his visit and the main cause which led to the failure of the mission. Though the opinion in India has been that the Cripps visit left this country with more accentuated communal differences it is claimed in England that certain advantages have been reaped as a result of Sir Stafford's mission. Mr. Amery pointed out that the Madras resolution appealing to the A.I.C.C. to concede the Muslim demand would never have been passed but for the initiative taken by the British Government in sending Sir Stafford to India.

Sir Stafford explained the difficulties in the course of the negotiations and the differences on which the mission failed. There is no doubt that on the whole public opinion in India regarded the British offer to India for self-determination as sincere. India could go out of the Commonwealth if she so desired. This placed the question of the future status of India beyond the shadow of doubt. This offer was accompanied by the proposal to have a constitution-making body which would frame the future constitution of India. This was virtually the Constituent Assembly since the Government agreed to implement the agreed recommendations of this body. There is little criticism from the Indian side on this aspect of the draft declaration. Considerable opposition was voiced, according to Sir Stafford, on the right of non-accession proposed to be given to certain provinces. But as Sir Stafford points out even this was not the point on which the negotiations failed.

With regard to Defence, broadly the final proposals were to entrust some functions of the Defence Department to an Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Here we feel

that the British Government did not go far enough in associating Indians with the conduct of the war. The list of items of Defence which the British Government were prepared to hand over to an Indian member is hardly satisfactory. Beyond handing over management of canteens, charge of petrol supplies, organisation of comforts for Indian troops and like comparatively unimportant matters, the British Government did not propose to part with any further power. While there was unanimity of opinion that the functions of the Commander-in-Chief in relation to control of armed forces and the day to day conduct of warfare should not be touched, it was felt that there were many matters pertaining to Defence which could have been safely entrusted to Indian members. From Sir Stafford's review it appears that even Defence did not constitute the real cause on which the final break came. According to him, if the question of formation of interim Central Government could be satisfactorily solved there was some hope of the negotiation succeeding. We do not think this is really so, for if there was one point on which all the political parties in India agreed it was the demand for a substantial share in the control of the Defence.

However, according to Sir Stafford the final break came on the form of the temporary Government which would be in power until the end of the war. Here we feel that the Congress party is to be blamed, and the form of the interim Government was merely made an excuse for breaking up of the negotiations, as the Congress did not feel satisfied generally with the draft declaration. From the very start it had been made clear that the Government of India Act could not be radically altered so as to make the Viceroy, in law, the constitutional head of the Cabinet. It was always understood that wherever the Viceroy's Executive Council was unanimous in its recommendations the Viceroy would not ordinarily over-ride it. It was on the same understanding that the Congress had accepted offices in the provinces relying upon its threat to resign in case the minister's advice was discarded by the Governor. The same thing would have applied to the Executive Council of the Viceroy. It is rather strange, therefore, that the final break of the negotiations should have occurred on a subject which did not figure in the negotiations almost until the last day. However, apart from what transpired in the past the question is what is the prospect for the immediate future. It is rather to be regretted that Sir Stafford should have wound up his speech with the remark that 'For the time being there is nothing further that we can do. We must be patient and Indian leaders can agree.' We do not think this attitude on the part of the British Government can be helpful. Fresh steps should be taken by them to see whether the point on which negotiations broke can be readjusted. Perhaps after the failure of the Cripps mission and faced with the prospect of political stalemate and of inaction against foreign aggression, it is conceivable that Indian leaders may carry on the next stage of negotiations in a more chastened mood.

234. 'Azad Contradicts Rajaji's Statement': Statement to the Press
by Maulana Azad Replying to C. Rajagopalachari's Statement,
2 June 1942
The Bombay Chronicle, 3 June 1942.

The Cripps' negotiations broke down on defence alone; and Mr. Rajagopalachari's statement to the contrary is entirely baseless, said the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in an interview to the Associated Press.

The Maulana Was referring to Mr. Rajagopalachari's speech at Coimbatore in which he was reported to have said: 'The statement that control over defence was denied in any circumstances, represented the position as it stood when the Cripps negotiations started, but at subsequent stage, it became clear that as a result of cable exchange, the British Government were prepared to modify the position and give us a part in Defence also. The negotiations broke over other points and not over Defence.'

Absolutely Baseless

When my friend has discovered a new creed all of a sudden that freedom or no freedom, control over Defence or no control, National Government at the Centre or no National Government at all, we should resume the Provincial Ministries which we have given up, no statement from him can surprise me. I would only say that all the documents in connection with the Cripps' Mission have been published. Every one who has read the correspondence between Sir Stafford and myself can say unhesitatingly that the statement of Rajaji is absolutely baseless.

In the very first interview when Sir S. Cripps, I had said with due emphasis that the trend of events has carried the Indian problem to such a state that we are not much concerned about the future, the real question is that of the present. The plan offered by the Draft Declaration does not say anything positive about the present. But the negative side of the matter is quite clear. It shows that defence will remain wholly in British control. The Congress will never agree to it.

As our negotiations proceeded further on, naturally many other problems came under discussion, but the main point under discussion remained the question of Defence.

How Col. Johnson Came In

When I handed over the resolution of the Congress working Committee to Sir Stafford on April 2, 1942, he said that he was cabling to London from where he expected a speedy reply. He, therefore, requested the Committee not to publish Resolution. On April 7th he sent me the new proposal of the British Government about Defence. It was rejected by Working Committee, because, although it contained in appearance a seat for an Indian representative as a Defence Member, in reality he was given no share in the control of defence. As I had promised Col. Louis Johnson to give him a chance of intervention if our talks did not succeed, he was, therefore, apprised of the situation. Col. Johnson handed over to us another formula on April 8. It was admitted in the formula that 'the defence department will be placed in charge of a representative Indian Member with the exception of the function to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as War Member, and a War Department would be constituted which would take over such functions of the Defence Department as are not retained by the defence Member. A list of all the retained functions has been agreed.

Same Thing in Better Form

Col Johnson had said about the list mentioned above that if that formula was accepted, it would be drawn up by common consent. When Sir Stafford was asked to give the list, he informed us that nothing could be added to the list sent to us along with the letter of April 7. The only difference between the first and the second formula is, that the later tries to present the same thing in a better form.

As the Working Committee was not after appearances in place of the reality, it was forced to reject it also. This put a stop to further negotiations.

It will thus be seen how erroneous and misleading is the statement of Rajaji that as a result of cable exchange the British Government were prepared to modify the position, and give us a part in defence also. In fact the “part in defence” which the British Government was prepared to give us was no part in defence at all. The Congress Working Committee, therefore, rejected it, and the negotiations broke down on this very point.’

235. Jawaharlal Nehru’s Letter to Evelyn Wood Making a Personal Assessment of Sir Stafford Cripps, 5 June 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 241–2.

Cripps surprised me greatly. I have liked Cripps as a man, though I must confess that I have considered him a somewhat muddleheaded politician. But on this occasion I was surprised at his woodenness and insensitiveness, in spite of his public smiles. He was all the time the formal representative of the War Cabinet, in fact he was the War Cabinet speaking to us with a take it or leave it attitude. Always he seemed to impress upon us that he knew the Indian problem in and out and he had found the only solution for it. Anyone who did not agree with it was, to say the least of it, utterly misguided.

Indeed I made it perfectly plain to him that there were limits beyond which I could not carry the Congress and there were limits beyond which the Congress could not carry the people. But he thought that all this was totally beside the point.

236. Jawaharlal Nehru’s Interview to the Press, Responding to Cripps’s Interview in London, 16 June 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 242–3.

Question: How do you react to Sir Stafford Cripps’s interview to the United Press in London, that ‘We are not going to walk out of India right in the middle of the War, although we do not wish to remain there for any imperialist reasons.’

Jawaharlal Nehru: I can quite believe that the British Government has no present intention of walking out of India in the middle of the war or after this. But much has happened in this war which the British Government did not intend and did not like and much is going to happen in India and elsewhere in spite of the wishes of the British Government.

I do not wish to continue the argument on what took place during our conversations with Sir Stafford Cripps. This has been sufficiently debated in public and every aspect put before it. The Cripps proposals have gone into the limbo of things, done with and forgotten. They have no reality now.

Only one thing I should like to say, that is, that Sir Stafford’s statement to the effect that the Working Committee had apparently accepted the proposals and it was only after further consultations with Mahatma Gandhi that they were turned down, is entire incorrect. It is true that newspapers were making guesses and sometimes stating that the Working Committee was likely to accept the proposals, but Sir Stafford ought to know that these newspaper stories had no basis. After Gandhiji left Delhi there was no consultation with him of any kind and it is entirely wrong to imagine that the rejection was due to his pressure.

Sir Stafford appears to hint that our rejection was due largely to Gandhiji’s adherence to nonviolence. This is also wholly incorrect. No question of violence and nonviolence arose in

our talks or in our consideration of this subject. We rejected the proposals purely on political grounds and we rejected them unanimously because they did not transfer real power to the Indian people. It was only a travesty of power that was offered, and India, which has stood these long years for complete independence, could not accept these humiliating proposals. Let me say again that the question has to be considered on political grounds and on no other. It is on the basis of independence and independence alone that we can consider the question of India.

237. 'Why Cripps Failed': Louis Fischer's Statement in the American Magazine *The Nation* on the Cripps Mission

The Bombay Chronicle, 28 September 1942.

'Sir Stafford Cripps' mission to India failed because he withdrew the offer of immediate Indian Government', Mr. Louis Fischer, the American writer and lecturer, who was in India at the time of the negotiations, declares in today's issue of the American magazine 'The Nation.'

Mr. Fischer quotes a letter from the President of the Congress Party, Maulana Azad, to Sir Stafford Cripps recapitulating the negotiations and describing the offer.

In his reply Sir Stafford Cripps did not deny making the proposal and allowed Mr. Azad to print the letter in a pamphlet.

The letter read: 'What we were told in our very first talks with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that position of the Viceroy would be analogous in fact to that of the King of England 'vis-à-vis' his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions Office. The whole picture which you sketched for us has now been completely shattered by what you told us during our interview.'

Mr. Fischer quotes British Military officials as well as Congress partisans to the effect that the withdrawal of the offer caused the negotiations to breakdown.

Chapter 4. Student Politics

1. All India Students Federation (Faroqui Group) Pledges Unconditional Support to the War

The Statesman, 4 January 1942.

Patna, January 2

Unconditional support to the war will be the new policy of the All India Students' Federation (Faroqui Group) which concluded its seventh session here last night.

.... 'From Hitler's treacherous attack on the U.S.S.R. to Japan's unprovoked aggression in the Pacific, leading to America's entry into the world struggle, a series of events have taken place completely transforming the character of the war. The All-India Students' Federation must take note of this change and reformulate its policy towards the war.'

It is not enough for us to express sympathy or give our moral support to the war of the anti-Fascist front led by the Soviet Union. It would be wrong to say we cannot do anything till we are free or till we are granted such and such demands.

The titanic struggle for world liberation raging in five continents, which is now knocking at our very doors, demands of us, the Indian people, that we unite, hold up our heads, and declare to the people of the world: 'We know this war is just. We are in it and we are determined to do everything to win it.'

.... The conference also adopted a resolution calling upon the provincial students' organizations to make strenuous efforts towards the removal of distrust and suspicion amongst the two major communities by holding meetings and arranging demonstrations....

2. Copy of AISF Circular No. 2, Dated 10 January 1942, to All PSFs on Independence Day

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 101, NMML.

Independence Day this year has special significance for us.

Comrades from several provinces have enquired as to how we should celebrate the Day this year. Some of these inquiries seem to suggest as if comrades are in doubt whether to celebrate the day or not; in view of the new policy of the AISF towards War. Now it is utterly wrong to think that the new policy rules out Independence Day celebrations. If anything it reminds us that we celebrate the day with greater enthusiasm this year. The new policy of support to war does not mean that our struggle for Independence has been suspended. Not in the least. Our struggle for Independence continues not through individual or mass Satyagraha against War, but through mobilization through war. We shall take resolute strides on the road to India's

Independence not by fighting AGAINST war but by fighting FOR war. January 26 is the day of declaration of our national will to Independence and we should not only express this will, but show our people the best way today to achieve this freedom. This is what we must do.

We shall, therefore, celebrate the day with utmost enthusiasm and leave no stones unturned to make the demonstration a success. Only our slogans and speeches shall be determined by the new policy of our organization towards war. Without calling it formally so, we shall strive to make the day the best anti-fascist demonstration. Side by side with the demand for our own independence, we shall popularize the cause of the Soviet Union, the cause of the peoples' war and demonstrate how our own independence today is vitally linked up with the victory of the peoples of the world against Fascism. The Independence Day thus shall become a real opportunity for us to popularize our present policy towards war as the only correct policy for the Indian people to achieve India's freedom and the freedom of the world.

Some Practical Suggestions

Our practice so far has been to have our own students separate meetings and demonstrations in the morning and then join the demonstration and meetings organized by the congress. The same thing can be done this year.

Students' Demonstrations

In exclusively students' meetings we should pass a resolution reiterating our determination to win our Independence. The speakers on the resolutions should, however, make our present attitude towards war clear. They should popularize the new line. While expressing our determination to win our Independence, they should tell concretely what is the best way and the only way today of fighting for India's Independence and putting an end to stalemate, demoralization and despair. They should deliver speeches on the new line on the model of the speeches delivered at the AISF conference at Patna. But we must guard against one thing. We should not try to introduce the new policy in the resolution. Try to achieve unanimity for the resolution in the Independence Day meeting.... If someone wants to speak in reply to the speeches about the new line he should be given permission to do so. But we should on no account permit any amendment to our resolution declaring we should launch any struggle against war ...

Congress Meetings

In a meeting organized by the congress, we must join and call upon the students to do it. We should also join the procession. Not to do so would be worst sort of sectarianism, and isolating ourselves from the masses. In the meeting those students who want, can take the Congress pledge. The Congress Working Committee has deleted the Civil disobedience clause from the pledge. The only other portion of the pledge to which most students may object are those relating to habitual wearing of khadi and too much insistence on the so-called constructive programme. But as in the past we did not bother about these phrases, we must not make a fetish of them now ... If there are Congress meetings and if our representatives are given a chance to speak, they must put across the AISF policy....

The Question of the Flag

As laid down in a resolution at the Delhi Convention, we should hold Students' meetings under the students flag. Officially we should unfurl the students' flag, but we shall not object

to anyone bringing and displaying the congress flag or any other flag in our meeting. Similarly we should take our flag in the congress meetings. Main purpose is to avoid any bitterness on this issue. Use your discretion and avoid controversy.

Strike?

If there is no holiday in some places and if strike seems necessary for the success of the demonstration you can have a strike. Authorities of the colleges should first be approached to give a holiday. Much will depend on the local situation.

Don't forget to send a prompt report of the day to the UPSF.

General Secretary UPSF

3. AISF Aims and Policies: Perin Bharucha Clarifies Position

The Tribune, 13 January 1942.

Lahore, Jan. 11

Miss Perin Bharucha, General Secretary, All-India Students' Federation, has issued the following statement to the press:

'I wish to correct the misunderstanding that has arisen through the press reports of the proceedings of the All India Students Conference held at Patna under the presidentship of Mian Iftikhar-ud-din.

'Besides the resolutions on unity among students, communal unity, repression and students' rights, the policy towards the war was also re-discussed. But though the vast majority of All India delegates were convinced of the correctness of the new statement of policy (only 9 delegates out of 543 voted against the statement), it was decided not to adopt the statement as the official policy of the AISF until various provincial and district units had re-discussed the policy and sent their views to ascertain which we hope to have another conference at a later date....'

4. Excerpts from M.K. Gandhi's Address at the Benares Hindu University, 21 January 1942

CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 240-5.

.... People have great admiration for Malaviyaji Maharaj as you must have heard today. He deserves every word of it.... It is a rare good fortune to have him still in our midst, a living example of a pure life of plain living and high thinking; the students particularly can draw many a lesson from his life but I have a fear that, though he is physically in your midst, many of you are untouched by his great example. The fault is wholly ours, not his. The sun radiates heat and light to all on earth, but how can even the sun help those who will shut themselves from him?... Who can be more unfortunate than the one who in spite of being so near to him fails to imbibe his noble qualities such as simplicity, sacrifice, patriotism, generosity and universal love?

.... As speaker after speaker spoke and left the dais, I longed for someone who would address the audience in Hindi or Urdu, or Hindustani, aye, even in Sanskrit—even in Marathi, or for that matter in any of the Indian languages. But no such good luck befell me and you.... We devote precious years of our lives to learning the English language, our ambition being to be able to speak English as Englishmen, and our breast swells with pride when an Englishman

pats us on our back for speaking flawless English. Think of the time and energy of our youth expended on learning the English language, as if it was our mother tongue, and calculate by simple multiplication the number of years and the volume of precious energy that are lost to the nation.

....You know what has happened in Japan—a country which I do not regard as essentially great—but which is regarded as great in Asia in that it has successfully challenged the supremacy of America and England. The thousands of boys and girls in the Japanese schools and colleges receive their education not through the medium of English but through Japanese. Their script is difficult, but it is no bar to their learning it and they have not given it up in preference to the Roman. Not that they boycott English and other European languages. But they economize their energy. Those who need to learn them do so for enriching the Japanese thought with knowledge which the West alone can give. They take care to turn into Japanese all that is worth taking from the West. That is because the mind of Japan's youth is fresh and alert....

There is another thing to which I am tempted to draw your attention. I witnessed this morning a scene that I had least expected here. There was a Vasant Panchami day procession of the students who had to march past Malaviyaji's house after receiving his silent blessings. The way in which they were walking betrayed a lack of even elementary physical training. Instead of walking in step, erect and disciplined like soldiers on the march, they walked haphazardly in a desultory manner. Their walking could hardly be called a march. In my opinion they are so much burdened with English that they find no time to attend to other things. That is why they are unable to learn the things they must.

.... One more thought I should like to leave with you. Every university is supposed to have its tradition, its distinctive feature—Oxford and Cambridge, for instance, have theirs. They take pride in the fact that the students they turn out can at once be identified for the distinctive impression left on them by the universities. Our universities have no such distinctive mark. But I am afraid our universities are the blotting-sheets of the West. We have borrowed the superficial features of the Western universities, and flattered ourselves that we have founded living universities here. Do they reflect or respond to the needs of the masses?... Let me make a suggestion to you. Have you been able to attract to your University youths from Aligarh? Have you been able to identify yourselves with them? That, I think, should be your special work the special contribution of your University. Money has come in, and more will come in if God keeps Malaviyaji in our midst for a few more years. But no amount of money will achieve the miracle I want—I mean a heart-unity between Hindus and Muslims. I would like you to go out to invite Mussalmans to come here, and not to mind if they reject your advances.... Our civilization has absorbed, like the holy Ganga, many streams from outside, and it is my prayer that the Hindu University which is endeavouring to represent Hindu culture and Hindu civilization may invite and absorb all that is best in other cultures and nurse hostility towards none. That should be its distinctive feature. English will not help you to evolve this. It is our own ancient learning that will teach you this—our scriptures learnt and understood in the proper spirit.

One thing more and I have done. You are living in palatial hostels, but you should not get used to living in palaces. Look at the little house in which Panditji lives in utter simplicity and without the least splendour.... Many of you are children of poor parents. Don't forget that you have to represent the poor, and that therefore a life of ease and luxury is inconsistent with the poverty of our land. May you all be models of plain and simple living and high thinking like

Malaviyaji. May God bless you with long life and the wisdom to carry out what I have said, if it has appealed to you.

5. Letter from T.K. Chaturvedi of the UP Students Federation to
Jawaharlal Nehru, 31 January 1942
Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 101, NMML.

Dear Pandit Ji,

I have been informed that you were told by some responsible people at Benares that our All India Students Federation has issued directions to the local units of S.F., asking them to capture Congress meetings and get resolutions of unconditional support to war passed, instead of the Independence Pledge. I am sincerely pained you believed the report. I have this information on the authority of Shri Balkrishna Sharma ji. Very unfortunately on that day (28th), due to blunders of our younger friends at Cawnpore, and absence of responsible people from here a very unhappy situation arose in the meeting. We are sincerely sorry and since then have expressed our apologies to Sharma ji.

I do not yet know who gave you this information. But I can honestly assure you no such instructions were even given by us. In fact the A.I.S.F. circulars on Independence Day were received so late by us, that it was not possible for us to issue any instructions to the locals. I am sending you a copy of the A.I.S.F. circular on the Independence Day and you can for yourselves verify, whether any such instructions were issued. Undoubtedly our stand today on the issue of war differs from that of the Congress stand. But it is not in our grain to try hooliganism. Our method is of patient and ceaseless explanations and arguments. We approach on the basis of reason, and not threats. As for the Independence Day we have clearly asked the students to take the Independence Pledge of the Congress. I hope this explanation will suffice.

We are informed that you are visiting our city on the 8th and 9th of Feb. I am told you are to inaugurate a local students Conference. I do not know if you have given your consent. But I request you earnestly to agree to address a joint meeting of students under the auspices of the Congress Committee, and not under the auspices of one group or other. I assure you, even if you accept their invitation we shall wholeheartedly cooperate with them on the occasion, because we are anxious to hear you. But my humble suggestion is that your visit may not be exploited by any party. I venture to hope that your visit may pave a way of unity. We were encouraged to read your message to their conference, although you referred to us as 'the other group', holding for unity but unfortunately all our attempts have failed so far. And the biggest misfortune is that Imperialism alone stands to gain by our petty quarrels. I talked to Pujya Sharma ji yesterday and he has asked me to request you to grant us an interview even if it be for ten minutes. Shall it be possible for you to spare only 10 minutes on the 3rd or 4th of Feb. I shall place our point of view before you. Perhaps the other group has already done so. As for your visit I only request you to address a joint meeting of students under the auspices of the local Congress Committee, to avoid giving prominence to any group by your visit.

With respectful student greetings,

Sincerely yours,

T.K. Chaturvedi

6. Jawaharlal Nehru's Reply to T.K. Chaturvedi Promising to Try and Find Some Time for His Group, 3 February 1942

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 101, NMML.

My dear friend,

Your letter. Your account of what I was told in Benares is not quite correct. However it does not matter very much what some people told me.

I have agreed to address students' meeting in Cawnpore and not to inaugurate any conference. I have suggested that this meeting be held under the Congress auspices.

Certainly I shall try to find some time for you if you wish to see us. It is for Sharmaji to fix up my engagements. So far no one in the U.P. belonging to this group or that group of students has been to me or discussed any matter pertaining to them.

I am not well at present and I have got a very bad throat. Possibly it might be difficult for me to speak at any length.

Yours sincerely,

JN

7. Comment on the Two Rival Students Unions

The *Bombay Chronicle*, 22 February 1942

Bitter War on Students Front

On our table lie two magazines. Both claim to be the organs of the All-India Students' Federation ...

One is called 'The Student.' It runs over 36 pages, is published from Jubbulpore. The annual subscription is Rs.3. Much of the space is devoted to a review of students' organizational activities. Other contributions include 'The Red Army's Marching Song' 'Examination System of the U.S.S.R.' and a poem by Souchi Routroy.

The other is called 'The Student Federation', published from Bombay. It has a larger size, less number of pages and fewer advertisements than 'The Student.' It contains presidential addresses read, messages received and resolutions passed at the Students' Conference that was recently held in Patna (or one of the student conferences that was recently held in Patna).

Reading between the lines, one can see the undercurrent of bitter hatred that runs between these two papers which presumably represent the two rival student organizations. The rival group is referred to in such fragrant terms as 'Traitors', 'camp-followers of a decadent bourgeois-leadership', 'fifth columnists' and 'renegades'.

Both these journals blazon forth on their front pages the motto 'FREEDOM, PEACE, PROGRESS'. We suppose it would be too much to expect that they would add three more words to this motto: 'UNITY, DIGNITY, DECENCY.'

But it seems that it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle, for Stalin to sing 'God Save the King' and Churchill to chant 'Internationale' than for the Reds and the Pinks among Indian students to unite and stop abusing each other.



8. Belgaum Students and Independence Day: Influence of Forward Bloc: Extract from Bombay Province Weekly Letter No. 5, 7 February 1942

GOI Home Department (Political), F. No. S.D.-171, MSA.

A procession of about 1000 Belgaum students was taken out on 'Independence Day' under the direction of Bidesh T. Kulkarni, Provincial organizer of the Karnatak Forward Bloc. It terminated at Thalakwadi where B.T. Kulkarni made a speech. Another procession of 800 students starting from the Mission High School terminated at the Maruti temple. It was addressed by R. A. Mangdi, Laxman Ajjankar, Chebbi and B.T. Kulkarni. The students were exhorted to join the Forward Bloc and hoped that Subash Chandra Bose might bring freedom to India. The great majority of students did not attend school or college on this day. The Forward Bloc, Belgaum, is attempting to bring the Students' Federation under its influence while the District Congress Committee is also endeavouring to win their support and detach their sympathies from communist ideas.

9. Surat Students and Communist Influence: Extract from Bombay Province Weekly Letter No. 5, 7 February 1942

Bombay Home Department (Political), F. No. S.D.-171, MSA.

There was ... a meeting of 700 students held under the auspices of the Surat Vidyarthi Sangh. Vajubhai Shukla of Rajkot gave an address during which one Indrakant P. Shukla distributed Communist leaflets printed in Gujarati for which he was arrested on the spot. This leaflet purports to have been issued by the Surat District Communist Party and describes how British Imperialism has been responsible for the economic and spiritual downfall of India. The present social order can only be changed by becoming conscious of class war and destroying Indian capitalism.

There were similar students' demonstrations both at Thasia (Kaira) and in Ahmedabad.

10. Ahmedabad Students' Union in Favour of Cooperation with City Congress Committee

Bombay Home Department (Political), No. S.D.-171, MSA.

The Executive Committee of the Ahmedabad Students' Union has decided to cooperate with the Ahmedabad City Congress Committee in the working of the Citizens' Protection Scheme. A final decision is expected at a general meeting of the Union.

11. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

Students—The confusion in the students' ranks caused by recent criticisms of the Farooqui group's war policy by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Lohia continued and there have been many defections in Patna from the Farooqui to the Shah group. The Executive of the

Farooqui group at a meeting held at Patna on the 22nd and 23rd February were at pains to explain that the resolution in support of war effort did not imply unconscious cooperation with the British Imperialism, but the conversion of war as carried on in an imperialist way to one for the liberation of the Indian people and opposition to Fascism.

12. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Addresses Students' Protest Meeting in Lucknow Demanding Release of Political Detenus

The National Herald, 26 February 1942.

'Political detenus are treated like ordinary criminals but the time has come when we should tell the Government that we would not tolerate such inhuman behaviour any more. Respect for individuals' rights is the basis of every just government and we must establish such a Government in India', said Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, president of the Detenus' Aid Society, presiding over a largely attended meeting held in Aminabad Park this evening. The meeting was organised by the students of Lucknow to protest against the repressive policy of the Government regarding political prisoners.

.... Mr. Kidwai said that till now people were tried in open court for certain offences and, when sentenced, they knew that they would be released after their term of imprisonment was over. 'But the detenus have not been tried in any court of law and they have been deprived of the right to know their crimes and their term of imprisonment.'

Lord Halifax said that probably the war would continue for 20 years. Should the detenus wait for 20 years in prison to let the war end, he asked.

.... Kazi Jalil Abbassi then moved the following resolution:

'The students of Lucknow send their warmest greetings to all the political prisoners and detenus and strongly condemn the callous, inhuman and illegal treatment meted out to them by the Government compelling them often enough to resort to hunger-strike. The meeting is of opinion that it is against the elementary democratic principles to arrest and detain people without any charge or trial. It further urges upon the Government to release all the political prisoners, whether under sentence or detenus, unconditionally and immediately.'

13. Lucknow Students to Observe 'Gopalan Day'

The National Herald, 14 March 1942.

Lucknow, Friday, March 13

The Lucknow Students' Federation (Farouqi Group) has decided to observe 'Gopalan Day' on Saturday, March 14, to request the Governor of Madras to commute the death sentence passed on Mr. Gopalan Nambiar, a Congress and labour leader of Kerala, by the Madras High Court in connection with the disturbances that took place at a public meeting organized in pursuance of the instructions of the A.I.C.C. to observe 'Protest Day' throughout India on September 15 last.

Two minutes' silence was observed at noon and a meeting will be held in the afternoon at the office of the Federation.



14. Bombay Students' Federation Meeting at the End of March

The Bombay Chronicle, 1 April 1942.

The Executive Committee of the Bombay Presidency Students' Federation met at Bombay on 29th and 30th March with Mr. Yashwant Patwardhan of Poona in the chair.

At the outset Mr. Abdul Sattar Parekh, the General Secretary of the Federation, narrated the activities of the local unions during the past few months.

The Committee decided to observe Sunday, 5th April, as 'Anti-Compromise Day' when meetings will be held and resolutions will be adopted advising students to carry on agitation against any compromise with Imperialism.

The Committee further decided to observe Saturday, 11th April, as 'Students Freedom Brigade Day' when the decision of the All-India Students' Federation to form Students Brigades will be popularized, and a vigorous campaign will be launched to form student volunteer organizations.

15. Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the First Half of April 1942 about Effect of Muslim League Conference on Allahabad Students

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The Muslim League Conference in Allahabad put a considerable strain on communal relations in that city. This was increased by the action of the Vice-Chancellor of the University in giving permission to the Muslim students to hoist the League flag on the Senate Hall, where the Congress flag flies. This infuriated the Hindus students who succeeded in compelling the Vice-Chancellor to cancel his order. Next day a crowd of Muslim students, reinforced by townsmen, collected and the District Magistrate, in the absence of any of the University authorities, had to forbid any attempt to hoist the League flag. The Muslim students were finally pacified by the League leaders.

16. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of April 1942 about the Two Student Factions

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Students—A number of meetings were held by the rival factions, viz. the Farooqui group and the Shah group. It appears that on the whole the Farooqui group, which is pro-war and anti-Japanese, is gaining strength.

17. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of April 1942 about Release of Communist Group of AISF

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

In view of the suggestion made by the Government of India that all genuine anti-Fascist student members of the Communist Group of the All-India Student's Federation detained or restricted under Defence of India Rules should be released from detention or restriction of movements in order to enable them to participate in a pro-war meeting of the Federation and a Students'

Conference to be held in Delhi from May 15th, 23 detenus whose names were supplied by the Bombay Presidency Students Federation were ordered to be released. The Federation stated in their letter to Government that all these persons held anti-Fascist views and that all except one were members of the All-India Students' Federation. The remaining one person was stated to be a member of the Indian Students' Federation in Europe.

18. Lucknow Students' Federation Plan to Raise People's Volunteer Corps

The National Herald, 18 April 1942.

A people's volunteer corps is being raised by the Lucknow Students' Federation to meet the present emergency in accordance with the resolution of the All India Students Federation. In the first instance a volunteer corps will be confined only to the students, but in course of time, citizens will also be included in it. There will be one unit for each mohalla, which will consist of the students of that mohalla. The volunteer corps will work in co-operation with the already existing volunteer organizations.

19. Special Session of Communist Group of AISF: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the First Half of May 1942

File No. 1/42 SB, CID Delhi, Special Branch, Chief Commissioner's Office.

Organised by the Communist group of the All India Students Federation a special session of the All India Students Conference to be followed by a Students and National Defence Conference commenced on the 15th May with Swami Sahajanand of Patna presiding. A number of students from other parts of India and recently released communist workers have come to Delhi to participate in these conferences. The proceedings of the first day attended by some five hundred persons suffered from interruptions by a small number of adherents of a rival group in the Students Federation. The interrupters were ejected from the Hall in which the Conference was being held and police interference was not required....

20. More on the AISF Special Session: Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of May 1942

File No. 1/42, SB, CID Delhi, Special Branch, Chief Commissioner's Office.

.... The conferences were not as successful as had been anticipated by the organizers, the student delegation numbering only some two hundred and fifty, although twice that number had been expected. Anti-Fascist and anti-Japanese speeches were delivered and support was urged for the British and allied war effort. This, it was emphasized, would further the cause of India's freedom and would not strengthen British Imperialism the disappearance of which was certain by the end of the war. The conferences received no support, and met with some opposition, from the Delhi public and press. On two occasions trouble arose, once at the first sitting of the conference when a few students of a rival group interrupted the proceedings, and again at a public meeting when there was an affray between Congress workers and communists, caused by the former taking objection to statements by the latter that the war was now a people's war. The well known P.C. Joshi was in Delhi for the conferences and met leading communists, both students and others, of different parts of India.

21. Ram Manohar Lohia's Speech to Kanpur Students, 12 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, Thompson Press, New Delhi, 1976, p. 236.

40. At Cawnpore on July 12, 1942, Ram Manohar Lohia, a well-known Congress leader in the Province who had been detailed to control Congress propaganda, speaking at a meeting of the Students' Federation (400) spoke as follows:

The Crown is about to fall. Now we have to see who picks it up—we or the Germans or the Japanese. The British can escape from this country but where are we to go from here? In view of all these things, it is possible that in the next five or six months, such a situation may arise as may lead to the transference of the Government of this country to the Indian people; or some other nation. So Gandhiji has started a vigorous movement for overthrowing the British Rule during this war. If he himself is not prepared to overthrow it, we will do so.

22. Vallabhbhai Patel's Appeal to Students to Join the Quit India Movement, 19 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* (hereafter *CWSVP*), Vol. 9, pp. 123–6.

.... The resolution which was passed in Wardha states that till there is foreign rule in India the communal disputes will not be settled. The rulers say that they want to quit India but only when Indians unite. I tell them that it does not behove them to say so. When two brothers are fighting if a third person who is an outsider comes and tells them 'You two brothers fight and unite, till then I am sitting in your house.' Will that be proper? That person should be slapped and thrown out.

Let Muslims understand that this fight is not for establishing Hindu rule but to break the shackles of slavery. We will come to understanding after achieving independence. Only then our slavery will be demolished. If we hope that Hindus and Muslims will come to understanding before achieving independence it is a false hope. We are not going to come to understanding by the rifle of the Britishers. They are sitting here to see that we do not come to some understanding.

.... It is surprising that when they have lost major part of their empire and when they are on the point of losing India even at such a time they, sitting at a distance, are yet so arrogant. How can that be tolerated? Today if people who profess different religions come to an understanding then they will find some other excuse.

There should not be disputes between themselves amongst students. Students union is a good name. Its mission is service of the nation, to build a nation and to equip themselves for the fight for independence of India. To learn from each other's experience and to have proper training at such times, is your object for founding this union and I congratulate you for that. I pray to God that by formation of this union the disputes of the student union will come to an end and all of you unite. In progressive associations if there are no differences of opinion there will not be any progress. Everybody thinks differently but it is a wise step to meet together and form a uniform code of conduct. I hope all of you will work like that but if somebody joins to break the association, he should have no place in the association. For others there should be place in the association without any discrimination.

After Quit India resolution, India is frowned upon by nations of Europe and America. The newspapers of England and America are vociferous in expressing their anger. Even by paying

thousands of rupees and by trying hard to give some place to India they would not have devoted number of columns to India as they are doing today; thought these columns are full of abuse.

Congress by passing this resolution has put their democracy to test. We also will be put to test as to whether we really want independence or not.

If we want to succeed in that test Gandhiji says that we have to make the struggle speedy and short.

Impending revolution will be so great and so speedy that every individual, big or small, high or low, has to take part in it. If all of us take part, then it will be a befitting reply to the columnists of the foreign newspapers. If very few people are with the Congress, then why so much anger, so much shouting and so much uneasiness? If handful of people are with Gandhiji in this struggle, then there is enough space for these few in jails. But they know very well that this fight will be unprecedented.

Now some people say that at the present help the allies unconditionally. Afterwards China, America and other nations will get us independence by their joint effort. When a world war had started before twenty years, then American President Wilson had said that Germans are like Kansa and so after they are defeated the principle of self-determination would be applied to all the nations. So Indians were overjoyed and helped the war unconditionally. At that time unanimously a resolution was passed in Central Legislative Assembly granting hundred crores of rupees for war. It was passed in one sitting. So much fraternity was witnessed. At that time British rulers had also said that as soon as war is terminated India will be granted independence.

War ended. President returned home. Those people told him that he was living in the world of imagination and the principle of self-determination was impractical. Then Rowlatt Act was passed which was an atrocious act. Those who tell us help them now and they will grant us independence afterwards will get other form of Rowlatt Act.

At that time the consequences of helping the Government were Jallianwala Bagh. People were ordered to crawl in the lanes of Amritsar.

Therefore we say that we do not want to be duped again. After deep thinking and weighing all the sides we have passed the resolution. Now we are not going to hear plea of England or America.

.... You will have to give a fitting reply to those who say that students are not with the Congress. You all will no doubt pass resolution to that effect but you have to see that you actively participate in the struggle. After the Wardha resolution is passed by the AICC you have to respond to what Gandhiji asks you to do. At that time if you try to weigh the sides then the future of the country is bleak. If you pause to think then you shall have to learn Japanese language and Japanese primer. Britishers had promised to defend Malaya, Singapore and Burma but we have seen what they have done. That is the reason why Congress says that Britishers won't be able to protect us; and those who have some sense also say so.

American mission had come here. It also said that in India production of goods at present is what it was in pre-war days. It has not increased. This is not the fight of human beings, it is fight of machines. In India there are no machines. Why do they not give machines. There is sea on three sides of India, when there is such a vast ocean yet in India not a single ship is being built. What is the reason? At the most on the sea coast one will find fish catching boats. Allow us to build ships and produce things we need, say the owners of Scindia Company, but the rulers are not interested.

This war is in the air also. Here hundreds of aerodromes are being built for flying in the air but has any aeroplane manufacturing factory been started? One of us had opened a factory

where ready made parts of aeroplanes were imported from America, joined here and thus aeroplanes made necessary. It was given permit after two and a half years. That also only one third parts were of the Government and the state. That factory also went into liquidation. Wagons and railway lines also have disappeared from some places.

They ask us to help war efforts but in order to help young men require thousands of rifles which are not supplied. If they want help they should supply rifles. Who refuses? But they do not trust us. They are afraid that if they supply rifles they will be used against them.

Let them give up power and be friendly with us and see how much help is being given by India. We are forty crores. We will cope with seven crores of Japanese. Let them stand on one side and see what happens but they say that we are not capable of defending ourselves. We are fit only to be slaves and that only of theirs and none else. This indicates their evil intention.

When Trincomalee was bombed they fled from there and also advised people to run away. They have made full preparations for running away but where are we to go? They say they want to defend India. India can be defended only by independent India. We are confident about it. That is the reason why we tell them to quit India. As such they talk of quitting when the war ends but why not quit now?

Today in our country they do not allow us to start factories which can be called veins of the country because they know that if a small country like Japan can be industrial and create trouble then what India with forty crores of people would do? If they allow us to start factories then how can they take away raw material from here and sell us finished goods? They, in their country, produce grain which can last only for eight weeks. When that is consumed let them chew coal and iron. This is their condition. So how can they quit India? Even now they want to fleece India.

Therefore Gandhiji says to them to quit India. As soon as struggle starts you put your books on book-shelf or book-cases, lock them. If principal asks you to continue study tell him that as soon as struggle is over you will continue studies.

23. Trouble at Allahabad Students' Meeting: Hand-to-Hand Fight; Working Committee's Resolution Adopted

The Tribune, 1 August 1942.

Allahabad, July 31

There was trouble at a meeting of the Allahabad University Union, held last evening to hear Mr. J.B. Kripalani, General Secretary of the Congress. It is stated that one Muslim student raised a point of order, questioning the validity of the meeting on the ground of short notice and later cries of 'Muslim League Zindabad' were heard when the proceedings of the meeting began. This was a signal for confusion and hand-to-hand fight ensued between some groups of Muslim and Hindu students. Owing to the rainy season umbrellas came handy in this conflict and were used by both parties in striking down their opponents. Blows and fisticuffs were exchanged.

Some time after order was restored and Mr. Kripalani addressed the Union on Mahatma Gandhi's 'quit India' slogan. Later the Union passed a resolution supporting the Congress Working Committee's resolution and requesting the A.I.C.C. to adopt it unanimously. The Muslim students submitted a representation to Proctor, asking for enquiry into the incident. The Vice-Chancellor has also been informed.

It may be noted that controversy is going on in this University between the Hindu and Muslim students over the Muslim students' demand for hoisting the Muslim League flag over the university buildings.

24. M.U. Faruqi: 'Communists Will Fight Shoulder to Shoulder with Congress': Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the First Half of August 1942

CID Office Delhi, Special Branch, F. No. 1/42-SB, Chief Commissioner's Office.

.... It is a point of interest that at the meeting [Congress meeting on 1 August to observe Tilak Day] Muqim-ud din Faruqi, a man of some importance in communist student circles, announced that the communists would fight shoulder to shoulder with the Congress in the struggle for freedom....

25. 'Last Struggle for Freedom': Patna Students Exhorted to Come to Front Rank

The Tribune, 3 August 1942.

Patna, Aug. 2

An exhortation to students to come out of their study rooms and join the thick of the fray in the anticipated mass civil disobedience movement, when it was launched, was contained in speeches made by provincial Congress leaders at a meeting of students held here last evening.

Among those who addressed the meeting were Mr. Srikrishna Sinha, ex-Prime Minister, Mr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, ex-Finance Minister, Mr. Satyanarain Sinha, General Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and Mr. Jagatnarain Lal.

The speakers reminded the students of the part they had played in the 1921 civil disobedience movement and expected of them to put up a better struggle this time as the proposed movement was going to be the 'last struggle' for freedom.

26. Students and Politics: Advice Given by Principal of Fergusson College

The Times of India, 8 August 1942.

Principal G.S. Mahajani in his inaugural address to students of the Fergusson College, Poona, observed that though it should not worry him personally if any body of students left college and suspended their studies he felt it was his duty to give some guidance since he feared that clash of ideas easily leads in our country to the breaking of heads. The talk about the struggle and the sacrifice of this generation ensuring the safety and freedom of all succeeding generations was heard in India every ten years. Remembering as he did vividly the events of 1920 and 1930, he would stress two things—(1) any step that they might take should be taken only after full consultation with their guardians and (2) whatever one did one must always respect the rights of others and not coerce them by things like picketing.

Chapter 5. Communists

1. 'The People's War Line': Excerpts from the Deoli Thesis, Which Was Smuggled Out of Prison to the Underground Communist Party in November 1941, Advocating the People's War Line

CPI Party Letter No. 55, 13 December 1941, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

On the Jail Documents

A Historic Document

The document from our jailed leaders which we are reprinting in this Party Letter with only minor and formal alterations will go down in the annals of our Party history as a correct lead of decisive importance. It will rank along with the Three-Parties Letter which in 1933 led our Party out of the bog of sectarianism to the path which could enable us to lead the proletariat to play its role as the leader of the national struggle. It will rank with the Dutt-Bradley Thesis which in 1936 on the eve of the Lucknow Congress gave us the blueprint for developing the practical struggle for the United National Front, and forged for us the ideological weapon with which we could proceed to make our Party a political force.

The document plays a similar role today. Together with the letter of Comrade Pollitt to the C.P.G.B.,¹ which came into our hands simultaneously, this document enables us—the present leadership of the Party, to correct ourselves. It enables us to take the Party out of the mire of bourgeois-nationalism, negation and phrase mongering into which we had led it, on to the path of proletarian internationalism through which alone we could lead the working class and the people forward, by playing our role in the world struggle against fascism....

How It Helps

Comrades, you should study this document to churn your brains. It will help you to liquidate the left-nationalist slogans which we have been drumming into your ears these six months.... It will help you to make the TURN and you will join us in Bolshevik gratitude to these arrested leaders of ours. A study of this document and more Party documents which you will now get and many more of which are being drafted by us, will give you the NEW POLICY in its entirety and we are certain it will give you a NEW INSPIRATION and NEW CONFIDENCE in our Party and you will WORK as you have never worked yet and WIN the support of our PEOPLE much easier and faster than you or we can yet imagine....

A Note from Jail Comrades

@ Task of the Communists

@ The People's War
 @ Against Hitler Fascism

Fight for Proletarian Internationalism

1. With the Nazi attack on the Soviet, the proletariat and its parties are called upon to define their attitude towards the present war on the basis of the fundamental principles of revolutionary internationalism and take immediate and decisive practical steps. The question has become all the more urgent in colonies like India, where the proletariat, along with the people finds itself enslaved to a foreign imperialism involved in this war, and where consequently change in its attitude towards it appears contrary to the national interests as a slackening of its war for national liberation and assumes the colour of compromise and even 'co-operation' with its national oppressor.

2. To concretely apply the principles of revolutionary Marxism to the war in its present phase, it is necessary to study and understand the developments that led to it. It is essential to study the genesis of the war in its first phase, and make a searching analysis of the class forces behind it in both the phases. For, as on every other question, the proletariat and its parties decide their attitude towards the war also only on the basis of class positions and nothing else.

Genesis of the Second World War

3. Conspiracy against the Soviet: The Second Imperialist War, like the first one, epitomized the intense imperialist rivalries to dominate and exploit the world. Yet it arose under circumstances far different from the first one, it arose under an entirely new class situation.... It arose out of the disruption of the attempted counter-revolutionary front of the world bourgeoisie against the USSR, against the world proletariat, to solve their rivalries at the expense of the proletarian state. It was not merely a question of redistributing the world or subjugation of nations. IT WAS ONE OF DESTROYING SOCIALISM AND REDISTRIBUTING THE SOCIALIST WORLD AMONG THE POWERS....

4. From intervention to Imperialist War: The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was the proletarian counter-thrust against this conspiracy of encirclement, of intervention, which very nearly succeeded. It was the wedge driven by the proletarian state, by its proletariat, in the ranks of the counter-revolution. Defeated by this stroke in their nefarious conspiracy, the bourgeoisie tumbled into the most ferocious and brutal war among themselves....

The Collapse in Europe

17. Fall of France: The progress of the war staggered the imagination of the world. But these staggering developments themselves led to a new alignment of forces between nations and classes. Hitler marched from success to success. He finished Denmark and Norway, inflicting a severe defeat on British imperialism and winning strategic points for his attack. But he received his most staggering success when he routed the combined French, Belgian and British forces, forcing the former to sign a truce with them. British imperialism was within one inch of defeat. Never was it so seriously and directly menaced as after the collapse of France. Hitler could no longer be treated with the same old indulgence.... Hitler has surrounded the British Isles, menaced its communications with the Empire, and was angling for the French Navy and the French colonial possessions to seal the doom of the Empire. His industrial resources and power had become bigger than the power of the British Empire with the accession of French resources kept intact for him by the French bourgeoisie. Not a single military power was left

on the continent except the hated USSR with whom the British imperialists had now to seek rapprochement to save themselves. What the popular forces could not achieve in the past, seemed now realizable with the dire threat to British existence. Yes, British imperialism had to abandon its dreams of solving imperialist contradictions at the expense of the USSR and seek rapprochement with her.

18. Encirclement of the USSR:.... By driving the British from the continent, Hitler was making one front safe and avoiding a two-front war. The Soviet was to be struck in isolation, all the military power had to be concentrated against her. Hitler's expansionist aims were again directly threatening the USSR.... Nazism no longer remained one of the imperialist powers threatening the possessions of another. It was rapidly hastening to destroy the proletarian state to satisfy its expansionist aims.... British imperialism was no longer the gatherer of world reaction. Its aim, for the sake of its own safety, could no longer be the immediate destruction of the USSR. On the other hand its interests demanded the destruction of Nazism at a time when the latter was organizing for an attack against the USSR....

Concentrate on Nazism—The Main Enemy

24. Soviet defeat would be disaster for world proletariat: By its murderous attack on the only proletarian state Nazism converts itself again into the main enemy of the international proletariat—colonial proletariat not excepted. This is the A.B.C. of internationalism and the sooner the proletariat of India understands this the less it will betray itself and the world proletariat. Nazism has attacked the fortress of Socialism, the consolidated gains of the November Revolution and thereby the entire international proletariat. Nazism seeks to destroy the only free people of the world, enslave the Soviet proletariat and thereby create conditions of perpetual enslavement for all proletarians and peoples.... It does not require much Marxism to understand that if the Soviet is defeated, if the armed proletariat with all its vast resources is defeated, the international working class will remain enslaved for years, the post-war revolutionary risings crushed, both proletarian and colonial, crushed with the utmost ease, and the world will be made a safe place only for the most barbarous type of imperialism.... The only guarantee of future cycle of revolutions, the post-war revolutionary upheavals, is a successful defence of the Soviet, the biggest armed revolution. No liberation movement is possible on the ruins of the November revolution....

To conclude, the war against Nazism waged by the USSR, with the help of British imperialism, is a people's war for all peoples. It is the war of the international working class to defend socialism and safeguard the future revolutionary movements. Nazism is the main international enemy and has to be defeated with the help of whatever allies the proletariat can secure. The enemy is to be singled out and fire concentrated on him. By winning this war, by supporting and extending the war effort of their bourgeois governments in this war, the proletariat does not compromise with imperialism, 'co-operate' with it, but co-operates with the USSR and defeats the enemy of the working class.

25. The proletariat not only wants to win this war but win it quickly. It must thank its stars that the march of events have broken the encirclement, heave a sigh of relief that it has allies in powerful sections of the bourgeoisie itself, that conditions exist which will bring out a victorious Soviet without exhausting her too much, provided the proletariat in all countries knows how to make their own governments prosecute a vigorous war. Those who shrink from this task, concentrate their attention on their own national enslavement, virtually demand the isolation of the USSR from all powers, so that the proletariat and the oppressed nations may have the

luxury of not co-operating with their own governments. Instead of jubilation that the world front is broken, there seems to be moaning in their ranks which will put a Chamberlain or a Hoover to shame. HISTORY GIVES ONLY ONE MESSAGE TO THE PROLETARIAT:

WIN THE WAR QUICKLY FOR THE SOVIET!

DEFEAT NAZISM WITH THE HELP OF ITS FORMER ALLIES!

THAT IS THE ONLY GUARANTEE OF YOUR LIBERATION

¹ This letter is not available.

2. Note by V.T. Bayly, DIB, 2 January 1942, about Arrested and Non-arrested CPI Members Who Are Also Members of the AICC
GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

Arrested members of the C.P.I. who are also A.I.C.C. members, include:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1. R.D. Bharadwaj | |
| 2. K.M. Ashraf | |
| 3. Bishambar Dayal | |
| 4. Balkrishna Sharma | U.P. |
| 5. Sajjad Zaheer | |
| 6. Damodar Sarup | |
| 7. P. Ramamurty | |
| 8. C.P. Subbiah | |
| 9. K. Damodaran | Madras |
| 10. K.P. Gopalan | |
| 11. Sohan Singh Josh | |
| 12. Mubarik Ali Sagar | Punjab |
| 13. Master Kabul Singh | |
| 14. S.G. Patkar | |
| 15. V.D. Chitale | |
| 16. S.G. Sardesai | Bombay |
| 17. V. Narayan Naik | |
| 18. K. Mukherji | |
| 19. B. Chakravarty | Bengal |

Non-arrested Communists who are members of the A.I.C.C. include Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din and Nawabzada Mahmud Ali of the Punjab and Bahal Singh of Delhi.

Neither the Communists outside jail, nor the C.P.I. directorate as such have shown themselves 'pro-war' apart from the resolution at the Bombay T.U.C. meeting. The A.I.T.U.C. meeting at Calcutta for which this was intended, has since been postponed.

3. Further Note from R. Tottenham, Additional Secretary, 6 January 1942, about Release of Communists

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

I have already spoken to H.M. about this and he has agreed that there can be no question of immediately releasing either 'the leading members of the Communist group who are detained under the orders of the Central Govt' or those 'who are members of the A.I.C.C.'. I suggest that in reply to Mr. Joshi, if H.M. thinks that this should be done, it might be pointed out that there are important members of the A.I.C.C. (such as Mian Iftikhar Uddin and Master Kabul Singh) who are at liberty and who have not so far shown any disposition to make a declaration in favour of supporting the war effort. Moreover the suggestion that those who are in custody must be released before they can make up their minds does not appeal to us, since it implies that their attitude towards the war is a subject for political discussion and not a matter of personal conviction. There is nothing to prevent those who are in custody from telling Govt. that they have changed their minds, if that is really the case.

4. Further Note from V.T. Bayly, 8 January 1942, about Considering Each Case Individually

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

1. We fully agree as to the necessity of accepting help from anyone genuinely anxious to support the war, be he Communist, Socialist, or anyone else. In the case of security prisoners, who have hitherto done their best to show they are not, there is no alternative but to consider each case individually, without allowing factors belonging solely to the past, or the dim and distant future, to be the only criterion.

2. As regards the Communist Party of India, we are far from being convinced that the party as a whole is sincere in its claim now to be in support of the war. The conditions at present attached to this support only confirm that the majority are anything but genuine Communists, and are obsessed with an anti-British 'hate-complex' to the exclusion of all else. There may be individual exceptions, and it is worth trying to find out if there are.

3. Information to-date shows there is a considerable measure of disagreement amongst the Communists themselves—especially between those in jail, and those outside—and the position is far from being stabilized. All that is clear, is that those who are in favour of a change, have merely pushed their previous campaigns into the background, and have not renounced them. They are prepared to make a declaration in support of the war by way of a bargain, but not out of genuine conviction. From the purely practical point-of-view, the support of the Communist Party is clearly not worth the purchase if this means the party is given facilities for renewed agitation against the Govt.

4. When replying to Mr. N.M. Joshi, we think he might also be told that Govt. would feel more convinced of the Communists' genuineness, if 'underground' leaders to whom he refers, came out of their underground boltholes, and made a public declaration of the party's support for the war-effort, in the same way as British and American Communists have thought fit to do.



5. Intercepted Correspondence between N.M. Joshi, MLA, and
Certain Security Prisoners: Copy of the Letter Sent to S.V. Parulekar,
Detenu, Nasik Road Central Prison, by N.M. Joshi
GOI Home Political File No. 44/61/42, NAI.

My dear Parulekar,

.... You may have learnt about the change of policy which some of our friends have made. My policy remains the same. I am in favour of co-operation if National Govt. is established. Without National Govts. in the provinces and at the centre, the movement for supporting the war will not gather strength and the support will only be nominal as the support of the liberal party and of M.N. Roy is proving to be. I am at present carrying on correspondence with Sir Reginald Maxwell regarding the release of detenus on account of the change of the policy which they have adopted. He is not sure that promise of unconditional support together with a demand for a number of unassorted things will result in actual support. He is not also sure that some of the economic demands will not result in industrial disputes. I have written in reply that he could only judge about the future by actual experience which could only be determined after the release of the detenus....

The A.I.T.U.C. Session has been postponed to 8th February and the venue has been changed to Cawnpore. Any resolution regarding the war will not be passed there as we can pass a resolution on a political subject only by three fourths majority and I am doubtful if any resolution will get three fourths majority unless in the meanwhile Govt. will come to an understanding with the Indian National Congress.

.... I have to attend the Session of the Assembly at Delhi from 11th February. I do not yet know what I am going to do there. I am thinking for the present, I may have an adjournment motion regarding the release of the detenus if that is permitted and if I find it advantageous. I may give notice for a resolution for the establishment of a National Govt. However I have not yet made up my mind....

You know that Phadke and Shanta have formed themselves into an organization called National Service League with support from Lotewala. Indulal is now out and he had seen me in Bombay. He wants the Kisan Sabha to reconsider its situation towards war.

With kindest regards,
Yours affectionately,

Sd/- N.M. Joshi

6. CPI Appeal to Congressmen and Members of the AICC,
15 January 1942

CPI Party Letter No. 58, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

APPEAL TO CONGRESSMEN AND MEMBERS OF THE A.I.C.C.

Brother Congressman, Members of the A.I.C.C.

In this session of the A.I.C.C. you are called upon to make a historic decision. It is a decision which if rightly taken and courageously implemented relying upon the strength and the unity

of the people, can transform the fate of our country as no single decision ever has. You are called upon to redefine the policy of the Congress towards the one issue which has dominated the lives of our people and of the peoples of the world for the last two years—namely, War. You are required to give a decisive head to our countrymen at the most critical point of our nation's life.

The danger of foreign attack is knocking at the door. Our people left defenceless and unarmed by the enslavement of the imperialist rulers look up to you for a lead. The people groaning under the crushing load of war economy dominated by imperialist interests look up to you for relief. But these are only parts in the one all-embracing issue which is before you.

A New Situation

The world situation has been transformed since Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union. A new regrouping of world forces faces us. The war is no longer a battle of rival imperialist blocs in which the people are pawns and victims. It is a battle of the united front of the peoples led by the heroic people of the Socialist Soviet Union against Hitler fascism and its allies. It is a war in which the PEOPLE are the main actors shaping the destiny of mankind towards a juster and a higher world order.

Imperialists and fascists started this war for settling the issue of world domination. Both of them aimed at solving the conflict in their own favour, by unleashing a war of destruction against the Soviet Union, the base of the world revolution.

The criminal policies on which they staked have ended in fiascos, thanks to the might of the Soviet people, thanks to the bond of unity which binds the rest of the peoples of the world to their brothers in the Soviet Union.

Hitler fascism and its allies are facing their inevitable doom before the deadly bayonets of the Red Army and of the Soviet people, backed as they are by the most powerful alignment of world forces. The British and American imperialists find themselves in the very alignment which they tried to avoid and sabotage all these years because they knew that through it they could not retain their mastery of the world nor their Empires. The imperialists, the British and American, have in reality lost the war which they started to perpetuate their rule over the world.

A Peoples' War

The peoples of the world, rallying ever firmly round the Soviet Union and round people's war aims are advancing to win it, finally and decisively against Hitler fascism, against world imperialism as a whole. The aim of this growing world front is the victory of the people including that of the German people, and not of any imperialist group or cliques. Its aim is a peoples' peace based on the independence and democratic liberties for EVERY nation and not on an imperialist redivision of 'colonies' and countries.

The victory over the powerful forces of Hitler fascism and its allies requires peoples' mobilization in every country. It requires unity and the free and voluntary co-operation of the peoples in a powerful world front. The all-peoples' war against fascism can and has to be won only as a war of peoples' liberation. This is being realized more and more. A peoples' upsurge is rising more and more powerfully in the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe, in Britain, in the Americas, in the Dominions, round the war and peace aims set forth by the Soviet Union.

War of Liberation—The Issue

The walls of the Prison of the Peoples—the British Empire—have to give way if people have to stretch out their hand to people in one solid joint front to ensure victory over the common enemy. These walls must crumble by the joint efforts of the British and the Indian people in winning the war against the enemy of humanity. The new world situation has placed this on the agenda.

Are you going to play your part in it? The peoples of the Soviet Union, of China, of the Nazi-occupied countries of Europe, of Britain and America, who are fighting with unparalleled courage and sacrifice in the defence of the common cause of freedom are watching you. Are you going to take practical steps to unite the people, and relying upon their inexhaustible strength lead them to break the shackles that hold them from manning the battle lines of world freedom where to-day our freedom as well is being fought for? This is what they are asking you. Are you going to come forward to defend the urgent and vital interests of your people in this moment of growing menace? This is what your people are asking you. You stand before a historic opportunity. The duty to your own people, the responsibility to further the cause of our national freedom, demand of you a positive policy of action towards the new situation—towards the war in its present phase. This is the issue before you in this session.

British Policy

But where is the war of liberation, you will ask. We see nothing but autocratic imperialism riding roughshod over our people. We see the same thirst for world domination now seeking its objective perhaps through a new alliance. If this were not so, if this were a war for freedom and democracy, why should the British Government spurn the alliance of a free India? Why should they continue—nay intensify—their regime of enslavement and repression? Thousands rot in jail without trial and inquiry. A war regime which looks to the profits of foreign capital and not to the needs of the people nor to their real defence, reduce the masses to penury and heaps humiliation on their heads. War effort and recruitment is carried out with coercion and compulsion. Mr. Amery reads us insolent sermons every month. Where is the war of liberation in all this, you ask. In the words of the Working Committee Resolution you conclude: ‘No subject India can offer willing or voluntary help to an arrogant imperialism’.

Not a Bargain—But a Battle

But we Communists are not asking you or ‘subject India’ to bargain with imperialism or to offer help to it willing or otherwise. That is not the issue before the session as we see it. The issue is what practical policy shall we adopt to fight the very subjection which condemns our people to these humiliations and sufferings, which prevents us from defending our own people in this crisis, which hinders us from taking our place in the battle front of world freedom. The issue is not that we help imperialism, but that we help ourselves and our own people. The issue is not that we help our allies in the common cause of freedom, the peoples of the Soviet Union, of China and the British people. Our struggle for freedom is a part of the gigantic struggle of liberation which the peoples are carrying on against the aims of Hitler fascism and its allies. The victory in this struggle requires India’s freedom. That is why the progressive sections of the British people are carrying on such a persistent campaign for India’s ‘release for freedom’. What is required for the A.I.C.C. at the present juncture is to adopt a positive policy towards the war, a policy based on people’s actions which will force the imperialist government to

relinquish its autocratic and repressive hold on the conduct of war and on the governance of the country, enabling us to organize a popular defence, to protect the interests of the people and to participate in the war of liberation to achieve our own freedom.

Fight Imperialist Reaction

We have not the slightest reason to be surprised at the continuance of the reactionary and repressive policy of the British government in India. It is not the imperialist bourgeoisie which willed this worldwide anti-fascist alignment and the war of liberation which has come about as a result of it. It has come in spite of them and as a result of the disasters which their reactionary policies brought in their trail during the last two years or more. When the new alignment came after Hitler's attack upon the U.S.S.R., it corresponded with a sharp division in the camp of the ruling circles of Britain and America. The most reactionary, pro-fascist section, the 'appeasers' in England and the 'isolationists' in America, were pushed into the background. A section which is prepared to bow to the demand of the people for 100% co-operation and alliance with the U.S.S.R. to defeat Hitler fascism and its allies is coming to the front. But the reactionaries are by no means defeated. They are present in the Government and in the administration. It is these reactionaries who are mainly responsible for policies which weaken the struggle against fascism. The refusal to open a second front in western Europe at a time when Hitler's armies are being battered on the eastern front, the failure to achieve complete co-ordination with the peace aims of the Soviet Union and of the progressive peoples, the continuation of the enslavement of India—are such policies which hinder quick and decisive victory over fascism, and of the cause of liberation. The progressive sections of the British and American people are fighting these reactionary imperialists' policies which weaken their united front with the Soviet Union. We in India are directly affected by that reactionary policy. It seeks to prevent us from pulling our full weight in the war. But we cannot make that an excuse for ourselves adopting policies of negation and inaction. Our job is to fight them in order to strengthen the hands of the other progressive forces, to achieve victory of our common cause and to end the slavery of our people.

Their Empire Is Tottering

We have to get away from the idea that British imperialism is invincible and all-powerful. It is not. This is truer to-day than it ever was. It has not only lost the gamble for world domination, but it is tottering. Not so much because of the blows of the rival imperialists but mainly because of the growing strength of the United Front of the peoples which is fighting more and more determinedly for the annihilation of Hitler fascism. The more decisively the people come forward everywhere to achieve this end, the more powerfully will the balance shift in favour of the people and against imperialism. This is the inevitable logic in this peoples' war. The idea that you could hold the imperialist government to ransom by withholding support to the war and then screw your demands out of it is born out of political bankruptcy, of complete lack of faith in the power of the people and of a slavish credulity in the invincibility of imperialism. The reality as it stands to-day is exactly the opposite.

That is why we say: turn your face away from imperialist rulers. You can expect nothing from case-hardened reactionaries. Turn to your own people and to the progressive peoples of the world who are waging this war of liberation. Seize initiative from imperialism. Forge National unity based mainly on an understanding, an agreement with the Muslim League, and on the co-operation with the workers' and peasants' organizations.

Our Plan of Action

Congress has to come out boldly rallying the people and uniting the various parties which stand for the freedom of the country on a programme of supporting and winning this peoples' war against the fascist aggressors. The Congress has to make its own the war and peace aims which the Soviet Union and the advanced sections of the British and the American people have set themselves. The Congress must declare: this is our war of liberation which we Indian people have to take into our own hands to fight effectively and to win it in the interests of our own freedom and of the others. The Congress must take initiative in forging a joint front with the Muslim League and with the other popular parties and organizations on a platform of creating mass sanctions behind the peoples' demands for the immediate recognition of India's independence, for the setting up of a National Government at the Centre, commanding the confidence of the people, for establishment of democratic liberties. Having roused and rallied the entire country round these vital demands essential for winning the war for freedom, the Congress should then proceed to form joint ministries in the provinces pledged to implement as far as lies in their power the people's demands and to support the struggle of the people for their full realization, pledged to develop peoples' war efforts, suppressing all coercion and compulsion, organizing civil defence and popular guards relying on peoples' enthusiasm and initiative and pledged to economic measures to protect the people from the undue burdens of the war. If the Congress takes these steps and carries them out basing itself fully on the unity and the support of the masses, it can transform the situation in the country. It will create such a mighty popular upsurge that no power on earth can stop it from realizing its demands at the centre, from marching straight to our liberation.

Lesson of Recent History

Those who consider these proposals of ours as a surrender are themselves surrendering before the fear of the imaginary might of imperialism. Those who will persist in continuing policies of negation and inaction lack faith in the power of the masses and are blind to the world shaking events that are undermining the very ground under the tyrants' thrones. Those who refuse the path of people's unity, people's action and initiative to seize power to win the war, to defend the country and to protect the people, are betraying the struggle for freedom at the most critical moment. To imagine that the British rulers will defend our country against foreign attack because they do not want to lose their empire is to forget the bitter lessons of recent history. The reactionary rulers of France gave up Paris to the enemy because they were more afraid of the revolutionary workers defending Paris than of Hitler taking it! Quite recently, the American imperialists declared Manila an open city despite the angry protests of the Philippine population who wanted to defend the capital of their Motherland. But the American imperialists declared with an amazing callousness that the Philippines was to them 'no longer an asset but a liability'. Yes, what is Motherland to the Filipinos to be defended to the last drop of blood was now not an asset 'but a liability' to the slaveholders! This is how imperialists defend their empires and the people. There are some who say: what does it matter to us who are already slaves, if the British go and the Japanese come? Only imbeciles who are determined to remain slaves for ever can say that. Congressmen, however, are resolved not to be slaves of anybody, either the British or the Japanese imperialists. That is just the reason why they must stir themselves betimes and rouse the people to unity and action to take their destiny into their hands in the manner we suggest.

Support the War for Freedom

Congressmen, Members of the A.I.C.C.! Remember the issue before you is not of violence and non-violence. You are not meeting at Wardha to interpret the words and commas of the Bombay resolution and to announce the waiting world that we stand where we stood. The plain fact is that you can no more stand where you stood. You have to move forward with your people and at the head of them, to defend them to win freedom for them and for the world. The world is in flames. The Hitlerite criminals and their accomplices in the East are the main incendiaries to-day. They are the main enemies of mankind who have to be destroyed root and branch if the world is to advance to a durable peace and to real freedom. Humanity in arms, led by the Socialist Soviet people, by the Chinese people and by the progressive forces everywhere is at the job. This requires your unequivocal support and whole-hearted co-operation to win this war and to win a peace based on the independence and democratic liberties of every nation and on their mutual and equal collaboration. Those who are raising the fine point of hoary ethics—whether it is right to take to arms or not in defending the country in the present situation are really side-tracking the real issue. They are seeking to divert the people back into the blind alley of negation and inaction. The issue before you is plain. It is to achieve the freedom of the country, to defend the people and to adopt a practical policy for the same which the new world situation makes both urgent and possible.

The strategy which we have sketched above, of achieving Congress-League agreement, of forging mass sanctions based on popular ministries supported by the united front mass actions cannot but be victorious in the present situation. The growing burdens of war and the rising menace of attack has sharpened the edge of consciousness of our people, it has whetted their will to unite in the common fight. They are waiting for your lead to achieve the miracles of organisation and valour which will go to make the most glorious chapter in the history of our national struggle.

Avert Disaster

If the Congress, which is the undoubted leader of the Indian people comes forward with this decisive lead and the will to act, it can release such a powerful united national upsurge the like of which our country has never seen before. Remember it is the imperialist government which will shudder at the 100% people's co-operation in the war of liberation which will result out of this policy. Before this extensive people's mobilization, before this powerful mass countrywide activity, the rotten structure of bureaucratic government administration and of war efforts must give way. Is it not a thousand times right that it should crumble right now under the determined blows of our own awakened people? History will never forgive us if we the Congress waited in sullen impotence till the rusty bureaucratic framework crashed at the touch of foreign attack bringing disaster over the heads of our unprepared people. But this is exactly where the wooden-headed policy of the British reactionaries leads our country. This is the disaster you are called upon to avert.

Forward to Action

The critical hour demands of us that we realize that to-day we can only further our struggle for freedom by positive people's action in the context of the peoples' war. It would be unworthy of us as a great people, unworthy of the traditions of our national struggle if we sat with folded hands and relied upon the British government, upon the change of heart of imperialist rulers

to unshackle us. The cause of world liberation which is being fought with unparalleled sacrifice and heroism on the battlefields of the Soviet Union and China, and elsewhere, demands of us that we mobilize our people for that cause. That way lies our own liberation as well. We have to exert ourselves to smash the obstacles which hinder us from playing our rightful role in this battle for world freedom. With full faith in the glorious traditions of our movement, and relying on the inexhaustible strength of our people, let us march forward to take our place in the giant combat that is shaping the destiny of mankind and our own.

COMMUNIST MEMBERS OF THE A.I.C.C.

Wardha,

15, January, 1942

7. 'The Congress and the Soviet Union': Excerpt from CPI Party Letter

CPI Party Letter No. 58, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi

What the Congress Leaders Say about the Soviet Union

It is interesting to know the reactions of the heroic war of the Soviet people on the minds of the Congress leaders. All top leaders except Nehru know almost nothing about the Soviet Union. There are among leaders some who think that Germans are retreating because of winter and not because of the smashing blows of the Red Army. They think that Hitler has some plan up his sleeve. Sardar Patel is reported to have said when he came out of jail that Soviet Union no more exists. Hitler has won and the Soviet resistance is only isolated events. Nehru has not wiped his tears for the 'poor little Finland' who was a 'victim' of Soviet 'Aggression'. Even now when the most outspoken enemies of the Soviet Union have justified the Soviet action and praised the foresight of the Soviet leadership, he feels that the Soviet Union was not justified in attacking Finland! Nehru says that Soviet Union and China have to be helped. But how? 'We are helpless. British Government will never accept our demands. Therefore we have to wait till the Government changes its mind!' About the Communist line, he says, 'the British Government will accept their offer but not their demands.' That is what he thinks. Naturally because he does not believe in the might of the people. He does not believe in the actions of the people!

But among the leaders there are some who hold a different opinion. Recently Shri Purushottam Das Tandon, Speaker of the U.P. Assembly, wrote in an article:

'I have never been a communist nor do I belong to any Socialist Party. But I feel that Russia with all her shortcomings can be actively helpful in shaping a new world based upon considerations of man's individual dignity. Sympathies have been expressed with Russia by several of our leaders. I feel that our sympathy should be converted into active help to Russia in the prosecution of her war ... In the process of helping that country we will be building up our own strength and no nation not even the British will then be able to ignore us.'



8. N.M. Joshi's Letter to to S.A. Dange, 31 January 1942, about Notice from Government Asking Why He Should Not Be Detained
GOI Home Political File No. 44/61/42, NAI.

Model House, Flat A/4
Proctor Road,
Bombay 4, 31st January 1942

My dear Dange,

Yesterday I posted to you one letter regarding the conditions under which you are living at Yeravda. Today I am writing very briefly what your friends feel about the notice from the Govt. of India asking you why you should not be detained. I have already told you what my own view is and in this letter I shall make a remark or two regarding the view of other friends. Your friends feel that really speaking an explanation is due to you from Government rather than from you to them. They agree that your initial as well as the present position regarding the war should be stated. But they say that though now the world has changed the Govt. of India have not changed inasmuch as when you now want to mobilize our people to make this war a people's war, for the defence against the Japanese and for India's freedom and world freedom they (Gove.) ask you why you should not be detained and add insult to injury. They feel that Indian nation will awaken to the dangers of this policy and win you freedom and enable you to rejoin your post in the service of our people. They feel your present detention is negation of justice and is made worse by asking you for your explanation. The above is only a gist of their view. When I can I shall send you a little fuller statement. I feel that this is much better than a flat refusal to explain. You know my own views. You have, of course, every right to state that your detention is unjustified and you should state it. But I feel that you need not tell Govt. how your freedom will be secured. Moreover the assumption that the present Govt. will not restore your freedom is not justified....

Yours fraternally,

Sd/- N.M. Joshi

9. Letter from Rajni M. Patel to Claire Perry, New York City, USA, 1 February 1942, on the Need to Defeat Fascism
GOI Home Political File No. 44/61/42, NAI.

Security Prisoner,
Yeravda Central Prison,
Poona (India).
1st February 1942

Dear Claire,

.... I agree with you that the Indian people have much more at stake in the war now than they formerly had. In fact, I would go further and say that they have everything at stake [sic] in the war. It is a people's, a just, a progressive war and hence we renounce all our slogans of opposition to the war and pledge unconditional support to it. We are convinced that the youth of Britain, America, Soviet Union and China are today in the 'firing line of humanity' and

their cause is ours. There is a complete identity of our interests today and a victory over the Fascist hordes would be a triumph for all the forces of progress and freedom throughout the world. For this reason we certainly are with you wholeheartedly. We have only one aim, one single purpose before us—the defeat of the most brutal and bestial foe of youth everywhere, and to the achievement of this aim we have to bend all over [sic] energies even if it means an alliance with British Imperialism because the latter is today in the camp of progress. I know that at present the youth of America, Russia, Britain and China bear the brunt of the struggle. All courage to you. Rest assured that we are with you in your sorrow and suffering and your dreams of a better world.... Within the four walls of this jail I can only be an anxious spectator and an interested sympathizer, not a comrade-in-arms as I so much want to be. I can only hope that this opportunity will come soon for the Japanese menace to India has become real and imminent with the tragic loss of Malaya and the precarious position of Singapore. Because we have the will to win in the greatest cause of our lifetime, this life of enforced idleness and inactivity has become a terrible burden, a veritable torture....

Yours very sincerely,

Sd/- Rajni

10. Extract From a Letter, Dated 31 January 1942, from Rajni M. Patel to Zinat Nabi, Lahore College for Women, Lahore, about His Possible Release

GOI Home Political File No. 44/61/42, NAI.

.... Changes have taken place which one could never have dreamt of. One of the changes that has taken place is in the character of the war. And as you know I who opposed war now stand for its unconditional support because of its changed character. This, I presume, explains the notice served on me by the Central Government.... that the Govt. propose to review the grounds for my detention and that I should reply before Feb. 10 why I should not continue to be detained. Mr. N.M. Joshi interviewed me a few days ago and from his talk we gathered that a satisfactory reply to this notice may well mean our release. Within the next two months I am waiting for further advice from Mr. Joshi before sending a reply to the notice. Do give Freda the news.

11. DIB Secret Summary of Communist Activity, January–February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

1. General

After over two years of 'anti-war' activities, which continued during the past six months despite the Anglo-Soviet alliance and the about-turn in the attitude of the British and all other Communist parties immediately following Russia's entry into the war, Indian Communists are now proclaiming themselves to be similarly 'pro-war', on the grounds that it is no longer an 'Imperialist' but a 'People's' war, which has to be supported and won.

This change of front has deceived no one of whatever political school-of-thought with any knowledge of communist long-term revolutionary aims. It would probably not have been

accepted by Party members themselves—had not a change in tactics been forced upon them to extricate the Party from its difficulties, and in order to deserve the title of Communists.

Reports from all provinces meanwhile agree, that the party-mind is in considerable confusion as a result of the change to a pro-war policy, and that the party leaders are experiencing the same difficulty in explaining their position as M.N. Roy has before them. Most of the students and educated classes are against it; the illiterate worker and kisan is incapable of appreciating the subtle opportunism of a volte face; and Congress itself is unmoved, with its stare fixed on independence, and its grip on nationalist sentiment unshaken by Communist or any other arguments except its own.

2. Communist Policy and Tactics

The 'new line' was first announced in a resolution moved unsuccessfully by the Communist group in Bombay labour circles at the end of December, recommending support in the war-effort so as to convert it into a 'People's war', and urging reconsideration of their attitude by Congress, the Trade Union Congress, and other political organizations. The same resolution was adopted at the Patna Students Conference, but only after much hectic canvassing by the party leaders beforehand. It was repeated in the Communist amendment at the recent A.I.C.C. meeting at Wardha, where it secured one vote apart from the mover.

The C.P.I. leaders' intention is to proceed by gradual stages, and to concentrate (as before) on winning mass support and recognition through the labour and student fronts. In both they are meeting with open opposition from their Congress Socialist rivals, from Congress itself, and from many inside their own ranks, who cling to the old line of anti-imperialism rather than pro-Sovietism....

3. Basic Aims Unchanged

Internal evidence shows that S.A. Dange, B.T. Ranadive, and S.V. Ghate, were mainly responsible for urging the underground leaders outside jail—whose guilty conscience is keeping them still underground—to announce a change in the Party's attitude. For some time the latter refused to do so; but M. Stalin's speech, their own difficulties and the fact that the anti-war policy stood in the way of securing the release of the main body of the Party leadership, and fear of being isolated from the rest of the Communist world which the belated arrival of the British Communist Party's declarations confirmed, combined to persuade the C.P.I. directorate, after a six months time-lag, to execute the somersault which is now causing such bewilderment amongst their less sophisticated following.

The change in the Party's attitude to the war is outwardly genuine, but it is important to recognize it as a change in tactics only, and that the basic revolutionary policy remains unaltered, as the leaders in private have since been at some pains to make clear. This is defined in the 'Draft Platform of Action of the Communist Party of India'—copies of which have recently been circulated afresh—as the vicious overthrow of British rule and the establishment of a Soviet Government. It is significant in this same connection, that in place of the former virulent 'anti-war' propaganda, the C.P.I. press has latterly been publishing chapter by chapter, extracts from R.P. Dutt's book 'India Today', whose 400 pages are devoted to proving that only a Communist revolution can bring peace and liberation to India.

The generous interpretation is that the Communist Party leaders are anxious to co-operate in the defeat of Hitlerism, without surrendering their ultimate aims, or making any secret of the fact that it is the fate of Russia and not of Britain, which counts. A number of individuals

are shown from their letters, and from other reports, to be sincere in the wish to help in the war-effort instead of hindering it as hitherto. One or two student Communists have for instance applied to enlist in the Army. They are a minority however, and the Party as a whole has given no indication of any real change of heart.... Leading Communists who are at liberty have taken no active part in war measures, and have declined to have anything to do with the Civil Defence Services. Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din President of the Patna Students' Conference (and of the Punjab Congress Committee, as well as de facto head of the Punjab Communist Party) is a case in point, and deliberately left the chair when the resolution in support of the war was passed. He did not vote on behalf of the Communist amendment at Wardha, and has since publicly stated himself against it.

4. Communist Propaganda

Communist propaganda is no longer defeatist as before and has ceased, for the time being, gloating over the prospect of Britain's impending doom, but the iniquities of British Imperialism continue to be the favourite theme, even where support for the war-effort is also included. Nevertheless mischievous rumours are still connected very largely with so-called Communists, and local labour and kisan agitators continue with their efforts to create unrest and to exploit grievances. Reliable reports of secret discussions speak of Communist plans maturing when war uneasiness and economic discontent provide a more suitable opportunity than at present. In the meantime Party-members are to concentrate on securing key-positions in labour and in organizing the masses under cover of the new policy.

Communist propaganda is at present directed towards discrediting every possible leader and Party (including Congress) except the Communists, in the hope that when Hitler is defeated people will look to the Communists to lead them. 'Only the Communist Party leads the fight for a Socialist victory of the working class.... In the present crisis only the Communist Party is capable of guiding the destiny of India' are typical openings, and in explaining the new pro-war policy stress is laid on the Communist Party becoming the 'organizing centre of the movement'. Unlike M.N. Roy however, the Communists cling to the Congress, and lose no opportunity to condemn Roy as a 'disrupter' and an 'Imperialist agent' for having broken away from the Congress and also for having formed his own rival T.U.C.

Secret instructions issued at the end of January in reply to questions whether the 'underground organization' should be disbanded—in Madras and the U.P. certain underground leaders have been considering coming out of their hiding places and seem anxious to do so—are nothing if not explicit in stating:

'To think that our new line is making up with Imperialism is a dangerous illusion. Our new line gives us a programme of action which is the only way out of the present stagnation. The change in the international situation puts us in a stronger position than before. To expect legality is to forget that British Imperialism exists. To relax our efforts to build and strengthen the underground organisation of our Party is endangering the very existence of our Party. We all agree that it is a revolutionary period. Then it becomes our duty to strengthen our underground organization so that we may better co-ordinate our legal and illegal activities.'

With this admission of a continuance in combined legal and illegal activities, and seen against the above background, the only possible conclusion is that Indian Communists as a whole are 'pro-war', only in so far as this offers better prospects of anti-British agitation when conditions become more favourable....

12. Extracts from Balkrishna Sharma's Address to the 19th Session of the All India Trade Union Congress Session in Cawnpore, 8 February 1942, as Chairman of the Reception Committee

File No. T.U. 12, Archives of Contemporary History (hereafter ACH), JNU, New Delhi.

Comrades,

On behalf of the Labour Organisations in Cawnpore and on behalf of the citizens of this industrial capital of the United Provinces, I take great pleasure in welcoming you to this city....

You know, we are working under a great disadvantage. Many of our comrades are still in prison. S.S. Yusuf, Arjun Arora, Rudra Datta Bhardwaj, Ewaz Ali, Santosh Chandra Kapoor, Raja Ram Shastri, Ashok Bose and others are still behind the bars. Representatives of the British Government in our province seem to have lost all sense of proportion. I do not blame them for this. It is an old adage that at the time of calamities, intellectual perceptions get somehow inverted....

No doubt, this war is destroying some of the best and the noblest of human achievements. But it is consuming much of the dirt and dung and ugliness also. A new vision has begun to appear before the human eye.... Out of this terrible destruction is emerging a powerful creative impulse which is bound to shape things anew.... Even biggest reactionaries and conservatives have begun to talk in the language of Marx, Lenin and Stalin.

Have we not read, only recently, about Stalin-Eden conversations in Moscow? The British Foreign Secretary, on his return from Russia, said that it would be a mistake to think that talks were confined to only present problems. They covered a wide range. They included even a plan of a new world order after the defeat of the Axis powers....

If the end of this war is going to bring such vast, cataclysmic and fundamental changes in human affairs, is it not wise and proper that the Indian capitalist from this day begins to think in new terms in relation to his workers? And, let the workers also learn lesson from all that is happening today. Before our very eyes we are seeing old slogans losing much of their force, import and vitality. It does not behove us to repeat, parrot like, phrases and slogans which are getting stale and meaningless. Let us not be static in our thinking. We must be capable of thinking dialectically. We have seen proletariat Russia walking hand in hand with capitalist America and Imperialist Great Britain. And it should be an object lesson to us. 'Down down with capitalists' and 'Down with Imperialism' are the cries which smack of yesterday. Of course, so far as we are concerned, both capitalism and imperialism are there with us. But philosophically speaking both these are dead,—as dead as any street dog!... I do not say that England and America will overnight change into socialist States. No. It may not be so. But this much is certain, that the principle of Planned National Economy, minus the profit-motive, is bound to make headway in big industries in those countries. And the smaller European States are bound to come within the orbit of the U.S.S.R.

Similarly, it appears to me that the theory of class war and class struggle will change its aspect materially. We, the mazdoors and the labour workers, therefore, will do well to concentrate our efforts in the direction of solid organizational activities. We have spent much of our time and all our energies in agitational channels. It is high time that we learn to eschew tall talk. Bitterness in thought and caustic and vitriolic speeches have not taken us anywhere. We should, therefore, stop swearing at the capitalist. If he does not change, time will throw him overboard. Let us concentrate on organizing ourselves....

.... Today, the employers are making the same mistake which they made during, and immediately after, the last Great War. The prices of essential commodities have gone very high. It is the duty of the employers to so adjust the wage rates as to be in consonance with the increases in the level of prices and thus to balance real wages. In spite of the increases which they have doled out tardily from time to time, the wages of the workers in Cawnpore are far below the price-level....

My task is now over. I will resume my seat after expressing my views regarding the attitude which the All-India Trade Union Congress should adopt on the question of rendering or not rendering help in the war efforts. It has been said that the international situation has changed so fundamentally after German aggression on the U.S.S.R. that the factory workers in India should render every possible help in the prosecution of this war. Let me tell you that I am a Russo-phil. I am one of those, who, though not a communist, yet, am convinced that Russia's foreign policy, from the time of Finnish War to this day, has been in consonance with the highest principles of equity, justice and good neighbourly relations.... When Germany invaded Russia I was probably the first amongst the political workers of this province to raise my feeble voice, from his Britannic Majesty's Prison, for considering over again the Congress policy of carrying on Anti-War Activities. And may I tell you that every German victory in the land of the U.S.S.R. was an iron into my ribs?

I felt like going whole-hog with Britain in this war. But the blindness of the British statesmen has left no alternative to me except to stick tenaciously to the Bombay resolution of the All-India Congress Committee. To those who say: Unconditional support to this war, I humbly say: Comrades, do not neglect to see the objective situation which confronts you today in this country. What possible help can we give to Russia or to Britain even, in our own way? The short-sighted imperialist policy, which kept the army in India in hopelessly out of date conditions, which did not encourage industrialism in the land, which put obstacles in the organization of automobile industry at the behests of American auto kings, the policy which refused to put trust in us and take us into confidence, has not left to us any alternative except to stand and wait. The only help we could render to the brave sons of the U.S.S.R. has been given to them. We have, the Indian National Congress has, suspended the anti-war activities. Consistent with our self-respect, we could not do more. I hope and trust, this question will not create any division in our ranks....

Mazdoor-Kisan Zindabad

Azad Hindustan Zindabad

13. Extracts from V.R. Kalappa's Presidential Address at the 19th Session of the All India Trade Union Congress, Cawnpore, 8-9 February 1942

File No. T.U. 11, ACH, New Delhi.

Under normal conditions we should have held this Session in Calcutta but the venue had to be changed to Cawnpore due to the sudden spread to the East of the war flames which are practically enveloping the whole world. This Session is reminiscent of our solidarity before the historical split that took place in the year 1929. The storm of schism that since swept our movement for some time has left us all wiser. We have come to realize more than anything else

that no Central Labour Organisation worth the name can be maintained long merely as a side-show of some political group, however influential it may be. We have seen how injurious it is to divide the working class either for foisting on the organisation the pet dogmas and doctrines of a group or forcing the political predilections of the minority over the majority.... After the formal merger at the last Session held in Bombay, the All-India Trade Union Congress has indeed become THE Central Organisation, representing a powerful working class movement comprising different political groups. We are today more clear, more united, more strong and more practical than we were ever before....

Always Opposed to War

The All-India Trade Union Congress has been adopting resolutions opposing war for some time past. It is always the firm belief of Workers that wars are the handmaids of Capitalism employed for acquiring new territories either for exploiting raw materials or for marketing finished goods.... Nor does Imperialism change its character, if it comes from the East instead of the West. In other words, Indian workers who are a subject people cannot prefer one kind of Imperialism to another. Personally speaking I am opposed to Imperialism of all denominations: British, Nazi, Fascist or even Soviet, if Russia drifts into that greed....

Invasion of Russia

.... Our sympathies are naturally with the suffering masses of Russia. But the Indian working class, enslaved as they are, cannot afford to offer any effective aid. A medical mission or a small contribution to the Russian War Fund is the maximum that the Indian workers can afford in token of their sympathy with their suffering comrades in Russia.

Workers cannot gulp the specious logic that support to Britain means support to Russia. Not necessarily. Russia cannot be conjured up in order to blur our vision.

Workers have not been able to reconcile the profession of our Government with its practice. If it really means to offer support to Russia, why keep behind prison bars the political prisoners who are but admirers of the Soviet Union and who are avowedly anti-Fascist?...

Release Detenus

Recently some political prisoners, mostly convicted for offering Satyagraha, have been released. But the non-release of the detenus and other political prisoners convicted for their alleged or professed leanings towards Socialism or Communism is thoroughly unwarranted by circumstances and morally unjustified. Most of the Labour Leaders have been convicted, though under the Defence of India Act, for their normal trade union activities. The position of the detenus is even worse. If there is any unchallengeable evidence against the detenus, why does not the Government place them on trial?....

14. Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the Second Half of February 1942 about the AITUC Meeting
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

5. The All-India Trade Union Congress was held in Cawnpore in the second week of February and a meeting of 10,000 people was addressed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on February 8. His speech was political—the British Empire was crumbling.... When one section of his audience

shouted pro-war slogans, he became angry and threatened to take no part in the proceedings. Next day he ridiculed Government's A.R.P. arrangements which 'like all its other works' was useless. In spite of this the pro-war element in the All India Trade Union Congress was sufficiently strong to prevent an anti-war resolution being passed though they failed themselves to carry a resolution in support of the war....

At a Labour Conference in Cawnpore held in connection with the All-India Trade Union Conference resolutions were passed demanding a 50 per cent dear food allowance and a bonus of three months' wages and condemning the increase in working hours and at a later meeting a general strike was threatened unless these demands were granted.

15. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of February 1942 about Communist Interest in Restoration of the Congress Ministry

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

Manzar Rizvi of the Communist party has recently written to Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha asking him to take steps for the restoration of the Ministry with a view to more inspired conduct of the existing unimaginative war efforts. This is in accordance with the Communist Party of India's policy of participation in legal activity as a cloak for consolidating and strengthening the party's underground apparatus.

16. J.B. Kripalani's Article Titled 'People's War', 24 February 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. G-2/1942, NMML.

Nations of today go to war only when their real or supposed, vital interests are at stake or their independence threatened. They do not wage wars on ideological grounds. They are not philanthropic associations. However great may be the sympathy of one people for another, no war is undertaken in modern times for altruistic and idealistic considerations. This, in spite of national cant and hypocrasy [*sic*] about sanctity of treaties, rights of small nations, defence of democracy or a new world order.

There was great sympathy for the Irish cause in the U.S.A. and yet America could not go to war with England on the issue of Irish independence. The English did not love the Poles more than the Czechs but when Poland was attacked they felt that their vital interests were threatened. In the case of Czechoslovakia, as no such interest that would warrant a war were involved the Czechs were considered as distant people of whom the British knew nothing. Though nations are moved to action in defence of their self interest they usually advance altruistic and idealistic considerations for their entry in war. As individuals, motivated by self-interest, nations too would appear to have a conscience. This they expect to silence by inventing and advancing moral considerations for whatever suits their self-interest, for the time being. Also such moral reasons provide good propaganda, rousing mass zeal enthusiasm and fanaticism.

Russia today is in the war. It is in alliance with imperial democracies, not because it is interested in the preservation of their so called democracy or their imperial status quo or bringing about a new order of their conception but because its own territory is invaded and its independence threatened. As long as its territory was safe from Nazi attack it did not care a brass farthing for the threat to democracy or democracies' imperial possessions.

China has been carrying on, for its national existence, a solitary struggle against Japan for the last four years and more. Its cause is just. Yet neither communist Russia nor imperial democracies, ever declared war on Japan on grounds of justice and fair-play. Japan was not denied the ordinary facilities of commercial intercourse and getting war material. If to day China is the honoured and flattered ally of the Allies, it is not because Japan has come to be for the time being common enemy. Russia too would like to see Japan's overthrow but to day its self-interest demands neutrality. So it remains neutral.

For these many years that China has been resisting Japanese aggression, it had no idea of posing as a saviour of democracy or a crusader in the cause of a new world order. But as soon as it has come in alliance with England, it too talks in allied terms of defeating the enemies of mankind and having a desire to participate in the establishment of a new order based on justice and fair play. Those in whose cooperation China proposes to rid humanity of its menace and establish a better world order were preying upon it only a short while back. Yet when national self-interests coincide we have strange bed-fellows.

Russia too is in the war. It abandoned its revolutionary mission to usher in its special brand of a new order in the world long ago. Its recent policies have all been dictated by considerations of national self-interest. Whether it was alliance with Nazi Germany or now, alliance with imperial democracies, it is all with a view to its self-preservation as a nation. It has even declared that whatever the consequences of this war, it has no intention to impose its peculiar arrangement on other countries. The only thing that China and Russia have in common with imperial democracies is their opposition to common enemies.

In this world struggle where all are fighting for their own self-interest, as they conceive it, there is no room for India. No doubt it has her sympathies on grounds of justice and fair play. But these, as they do not weigh with other nations to the extent of their initiating or participating in war cannot and should not induce India to join a sanguinary conflict involving the lives and properties of millions of her nationals. If therefore, India were free she would remain neutral, as was America, in spite of her sympathies before her vital interests in the Pacific were threatened. No sane or practical politician would have advised participation of a free India in the present quarrel on idealistic considerations. Even as Turkey, Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland, Egypt and several other countries are neutral, free India too would have remained neutral. More so if India's policies were to any extent moulded by the present Congress creed of peaceful means.

India therefore is in the war not as China, Russia, U.S.A., England, Germany, Italy and Japan, by its own will and free choice but by England's will and choice. Whatever the character of the war, whether it is on the one side, to dominate other countries or on the other side, to preserve national independence, as in the case of China and Russia or to keep the status quo or again to preserve democracy and establish a new world order, India is in it not by her own free will but because England for its own purposes selfish or altruistic, wants to be in it....

However, after the Russian entry in the war a certain section of Indian politicians have sought to cloud these clear issues. They think that by the magic touch, Russia has turned this war into a people's war. Let us, however, analyse this concept 'People's war'. Who are these people? Evidently those of all countries. It also follows that people here stand for the masses, the workers and the peasants. There can be no other meaning when the word is used by the communists. Now have the masses, the workers and the peasants, of different countries acted as one united people in this war? Has not the proletariat of each country acted as a separate entity, united with every other class on national basis? Have not the masses of one land

destroyed those of another without any proletarian mercy? Have they not gloated over each other's destruction? Have they not again borne sacrifices disproportionate to other classes, in the nation, where such classes exist? Are the people of the world one? Is even Russia to day fighting for the world proletariat or for its national existence? True it has a proletarian dictatorship but has it joined the war to save the world proletariat?...

Supposing the allies won the war and yet India denied her freedom, will Russia and China take up the Indian issue and if need be go to war with her present allies, on that issue? If not how are the Indians to think that allied victory will give them their birthright? Do they not see the independence that has been granted to Abyssinia? Not to talk of the control of external affairs and defence, the very judicial system of the country has been placed in British hands. The Muslim countries too have a fair idea of the independence they enjoy to day. It is not therefore very clear in what sense the present war, from being imperial war waged to retain the status quo of the have-nations, has suddenly changed its character, and turned in to be people's war by the mere entry of Russia?

May we also ask where are the leaders of the Communist party in India to-day? They have re-christened the war, they have promised unconditional support, and as an earnest of their goodwill, they have raised voluntary contributions, and yet they are all in jail! They are there, even without a trial. The government believes them not, protest affection as they may. It does not want their help, however freely given, as it does not want the help of the Congress, the Muslim League or even the moderates. If the communist think that it is their first duty to help and save Russia under all circumstances, and if they feel that such a help is the only true mark of Marxian orthodoxy, let them say so, and render unconditional help to the British. For many years now it has been the practice of the communists to dance to the tune of the Russian Government. Whatever benefits Russia is Communism. Dialectical logic can make the two to coincide on all occasions. But if one is not to confound one's desires however good with political reason one would be prepared to face facts and answer legitimate queries arising from these facts. 'People's war' as a slogan may be good propaganda. But it proves nothing beyond one's sympathy with Soviet Russia. Much more will have to be done by the allies especially the British in India, before the masses of the Indian people are convinced that this is a people's war and the allies are fighting it.

17. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of February 1942 about Communist Activities

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

.... Communists in Malabar have been busy holding meetings in villages. They are said to have been appealing for funds in the name of Soviet Russia and to have collected some money. Most of the money collected is however utilized for the expenses of the organizers. Kisan leaders in Chittoor District are said to be active in enrolling members for the Kisan Sabha. In Salem students are reported to have inaugurated a Students' organization which was opened by Miss Parvati Subbaroyan. Speeches were made on the occasion criticizing the British Government as well as the Congress leaders like Sri C. Rajagopalachari.



18. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of March 1942 about Labour Unrest

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

Labour—Labour remains very unsettled. The strike at the Birla Mills which commenced on the 8th March continues. The mill authorities are adamant in their refusal to consider the demands of the strikers until work is resumed. The strikers approached Congress leaders and were advised by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, this advice being subsequently supported by Gandhi, to return to work and put forward their demands in a constitutional manner. A large number of the strikers seem willing to accept this advice but the more extreme among their number are still able to dominate the situation. There was a four days strike in a small cotton thread factory employing some two hundred laborers, chiefly women and children, and the 29th March about half the tram drivers and conductors resorted to a strike but resumed work the following day. On the 1st April the leading hands, some three hundred in number, employed in the Central Ordnance Depot in Delhi Cantonment, commenced a strike, and on the following day were joined by the majority of the workmen.

19. A Freedom Fighter Is Being Led to the Gallows! Save Comrade K.P.R. Gopalan from Death

CPI Party Letter Vol. 2, No. 4, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

Comrade K.P.R. Gopalan is condemned to death by the High Court of Madras on Thursday the 25th February 1942, for having participated in the Malabar Protest Day observed by the people of Malabar on September 15, 1940 for the incidents which occurred in North Malabar which resulted in the injury of many peasants and constables and the death of a sub-inspector.

Comrade K.P.R. has now become the legendary hero of September 15. He is looked upon as the best specimen of revolutionary leaders who are with the masses and against the oppressors of the people whether it be in peace or in war.

Born in a middle-class family, Comrade Gopalan worked for sometime as a clerk in a registrar's office. His close contact with the intrigues at courts and registrar's office made him an opponent of the system which used all its intellectual power for exploiting the peasants.

As in the case of many other youths in Kerala, the 1930 Civil Disobedience was a turning point in Comrade Gopalan's life, a new page was turned in his book of life. Instead of the easy and comfortable life of an educated upper middle class youth, he took to the stormy and tempestuous life of a professional revolutionary. His hearty and jovial manners and his shrewd and tactful way of handling complicated local problems and settling local disputes endeared him to the peasants. In 1938–39 when there were a crop of cases against the Kisans and the Taluk Union wanted to fight it out, it was Comrade K.P.R.'s shrewd commonsense and abundant experience which stood them in good stead and won most of the cases. He was as effective in court rooms and lobbies as at the head of processions or on platforms.

In spite of his ill-health he was one of the 40 hunger marchers who walked all the way from Cannanore to Madras in 1939. Be it in singing revolutionary songs or in shouting slogans, his was the voice that was heard uppermost. He composed some of those songs himself.

He was so popular with his neighbours that the K.P.C.C. had to adopt him as a Congress candidate for the district board in 1937 in preference to Samuel Aaren, the mill owner

Congressman who had an eye on the president ship of the district board. This and his contact with the workers in Aaren's mills enraged Mr. Aaren who has since then spared no effort to discredit him and defeat him.

In the district board itself, he was one of the 3 Socialists, who won the regard and esteem of all members for his stout opposition to anti-popular measures and his skilful presentation of problems. He was elected to the next district board too in 1940 when he became the Chairman of the Standing committee for Education. Meanwhile the Gandhites, Muslim League and the C.I.D.'s conspired among themselves and foisted a charge on him and his colleagues for bribery.

But events greater and more significant had taken place. September 15, '40 came with all its inspiring and proud record. Comrade K.P.R., as the leader of peasants, who paid their oppressors in their own coin, had become the eyesore of all. The police lathi-charged and opened fire on the unarmed peasants. The people resisted this brutal violence of the police which culminated in the injury of many people and the death of a sub-inspector. For this the Government of Madras wants to wreak vengeance on Comrade K.P.R. A reward of Rs. 500 was announced for his capture. All public places, lamp posts, notice boards, buses etc. had his photo hung on them. He came to be associated in the eyes of the masses with the real spirit of anti-imperialist struggle. The hunt for him began to be contrasted with the indifference for Satyagrahis going about the villages. He became a terror to the police, an object of admiration for the people. In spite of all the police hunt for him, the peasants saved him; in spite of his frail health, he worked for them. He was with them and had not gone away from them, as his and their enemies said. All the same, the C.I.C. could not get at him. After eight months and ten days of useful work among the people, he was betrayed and arrested. Peasant men, women and children wept aloud at the staggering news. They marched in thousands to the road and railway station to have a look at their leader. They knew that imperialism would not show pity on him. But they knew that its days are numbered. They will not allow it to deprive them of their beloved leader. Now on 25th February, 1942, he has been sentenced to death by the High Court.

Our blood boils when we hear that the heroes who are fighting for the freedom of our country, for the liberation of the millions of India are incarcerated and subjected to the regime of torture. When we say that we want to fight the worst enemies of mankind—the Hitlerite Germany, Fascist Italy and the Japanese Militarism—the reactionary imperialist government of India and its counter-part in Madras imprisons our leaders, transports them for life and sentences them to death. When we say that we want to mobilise the 400 millions of Indian people for the common struggle and victory against the violent enemy of humanity—the Hitlerite Germany, the reactionary imperialist government of India condemns us to death and transportation of life. This is how the imperialists fight Fascism.

We won't let the reactionary government have its own way.

Let us go to our people and make them act to save the life of our leaders, to win them from prisons for the sake of the fight against Fascism, for the sake of the liberation of millions of India.

ORGANISE GIGANTIC MEETINGS AND PROCESSIONS TO ANNUL THE DEATH-SENTENCE PASSED ON COMRADE K.P.R. GOPALAN!

GET MASS PETITIONS SIGNED BY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE—WORKERS, PEASANTS, STUDENTS, CONGRESSMEN, MUSLIM LEAGUERS, AND ALL THE PROGRESSIVE MEN FOR ANNULLING THE DEATH SENTENCE PASSED AGAINST COMRADE K.P.R., FOR THE UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF ALL DETENUS, AND ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!!

SEND THESE PETITIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS AND DEMAND ANNULMENT OF THE DEATH SENTENCE OF COM.K.P.R. AND THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS!!

DOWN WITH REPRESSION!

DOWN WITH THE ADVISERS AND AUTOCRATIC REGIME OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT!

SAVE COMRADE GOPALAN FROM DEATH!

20. CPI Instructions to Their Kisan Leaders

CPI Party Letter, Vol. 2, No. 1, 8 February 1942, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

Kisans and the War of Liberation

We are printing below a part of the covering letter to the A.I.K.S. Fraction and the draft of the Resolution we want them to put in the next meeting of the A.I.K.C. We hope they will be studied by all Party members for the **CLEAR**EST exposition of the new Party line that we have yet made. We hope the Provisional and lower units will translate it for the benefit of our entire ranks.

Covering Letter to A.I.K.S. Fraction

Dear Comrades,

Herewith a draft resolution for the A.I.K.C. on the 'Kisans and the War of Liberation.' It is rather long. But that could not be helped. It should help you to put our line correctly in the A.I.K.C.

Your endeavour should be to carry the Rangaites and Indulal Yagnik with you on this draft. The Kirtis will, of course, stand with us. In this way we should be in a strong position vis-a-vis the Bihar pro-Forward Bloc-ers, if they choose to oppose the resolution and the line. But even with them you should be able to argue. For the first time loyalty of the Bihar Kisanites is not with Bose but with Swamiji who stands fervently with the Soviet Union.

Do not get bogged in the question of whether our policy is conditional or unconditional support to war. This question does not arise at all. Because we consider this war already our own. Our policy is designed to take that war into our own hands, i.e., in the hands of the people. This is the meaning of our fight for National Government and democratic liberties. Our attitudes towards the war is governed by the slogan: We want effective war effort which is all-out peoples' war effort—free and voluntary. We co-operate where we can, resist where we must and thereby develop the support for the slogan—National Government for National War...

In putting forward our line argue straight. Entry of the Soviet Union—peoples' state makes the war a peoples' war of liberation—it brings into existence the world-wide unity of the peoples against fascism. The world domination aims of both fascist and non-fascist imperialists are disrupted. The people's unity under Soviet leadership places world liberation on the agenda. There are only two alternatives before humanity; either world liberation which means destruction of fascism and liquidation of world imperialism as a whole, or world fascism—two sections of world imperialism reuniting again to impose fascist enslavement on the whole world. There is a not third alternative. But the peoples must win. They have a unity which they had never before in the history of the world. They have a powerful and mighty leader in the U.S.S.R. of 1942. Indian people have to fight for that great victory for it

is their own liberation with the aid of powerful world forces. India's freedom will not come as a gift from dying imperialists nor from the blood-stained sword of the condemned-to-death Japanese fascists. It will be won by the people by their own heroic mass mobilisation and unity—emulating the glorious example of China and following in the heroic footsteps of the Soviet people. That is why we say forge a bond of friendship with the British people as with the other freedom loving peoples of the world. We have powerful allies—China by our side, Soviet to lead us and the peoples of the whole world to back us. The youthful and glorious world of the free peoples is arising out of the ashes of burnt cities, out of the blood of martyrs, out of the destruction of fascist marauders, out of the heroism of the Soviet men and women, out of the brave deeds of the freedom-loving people of the whole world. This is the picture of the present glorious period. That is why we say—relying upon the inexhaustible strength of our people let us march forward to our glorious future. This is the crux of our line.

One warning. You should defend the line bravely and well without making concessions. But do not allow disruptors to make that an excuse for splitting the organisation. Get the A.I.K.C. to pass at least a short resolution characterizing the war as a peoples' war, recognizing the war aims and supporting wholeheartedly the common cause of the peoples' of the world.

Draft Resolution

Kisans & the War of Liberation

Anti-Fascist Peoples' War for Freedom

1. The war waged by the Socialist Soviet Union, Nationalist China, Great Britain, America and other countries against the Axis powers is a peoples' war against fascist invaders, against imperialism. This is no more an imperialist war for the peoples of the world. The freedom loving peoples who have united under the leadership of the Soviet Union, are not fighting for imperialist or fascist world domination, but to end it. They are not fighting for colonies but to secure the freedom of the colonial peoples. They are not fighting for annexing the territories of any nation but to ensure the independence and the territorial integrity of every people.

Peoples' War Aim—World Liberation

2. The aim which the Soviet people and the freedom-loving peoples allied with it are pursuing through the war is the utter destruction of Nazi-fascist imperialism. Their aim is the liberation of all peoples and nations which are enslaved by or which stand under the threat of enslavement by Nazi-fascist armies. Their aim is an all-round peoples' victory, that is, the liberation of every people and nation from imperialists enslavement. Their aim is peoples' peace—a peace without annexations and guaranteeing the independence and the democratic liberties of every people and based on the free and equal co-operation in a just world order.

Under Soviet Leadership

3. Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union transformed the imperialist war into a peoples' war. The entry of the Soviet into the war created with one stroke a world-wide united front of the peoples to the utter dismay of the Hitlerites and their allies, who now face annihilation as the main enemies of humanity. The anti-fascist front of Governments consisting of Britain, America and the U.S.S.R. has become the instrument in the hands of this powerful unity of the peoples in every country and on a world scale, to destroy the enemy and to achieve world liberation.

This alliance which the British and American imperialists tries to avoid and sabotaged all these years, is now forced upon them by the sharpening of imperialist conflicts and by the fiasco of their reactionary policies. It becomes the beginning of the end of their world domination plans and of the whole system of imperialism itself. As the war progresses the unity of the peoples under the leadership of the Soviet Union grows ever stronger nationally and internationally and reactionaries are more and more squeezed out of the governments thus strengthening the front of the peoples and ensuring the destruction of fascism and the liquidation of world imperialism itself.

Our War of Liberation

4. In short, with the entry of the Soviet Union, the war ceases to be a conflict between two rival imperialist blocs both fighting for world domination. It now becomes a sacred and final war waged by the camp of the peoples led by the Socialist Soviet Union, against the camp of world fascism, the vilest and the most brutal form of imperialism, which is seeking to enslave the whole of mankind. The treacherous Japanese attack upon the peoples of the South Pacific countries underlines this fact in the grimmest possible manner for the subject nations of East Asia, including India. The war against Hitler and Japanese fascism is one and indivisible and can and has to be won only as a war of liberation for all the peoples including the peoples of subject nations of the East.

5. The All-India Kisan Council declares that this is India's war of liberation as much as it is the war of liberation for every freedom-loving nation. The Indian people have to win it for securing their own independence in close alliance with the progressive peoples of the world, especially in alliance with the Soviet Union and China. The Indian people accept the war aims which the Soviet Union and the advanced sections of the British and American people are pursuing in this war. We are proud to take our place alongside them in the battle line against fascism and the creation of a new and just order based on world freedom.

British Govt. the Main Obstacle

6. The All-India Kisan Council recognizes that the Indian people can now secure their National liberation only through uniting and mobilising the people for fighting and winning the war which is threatening the border of our land. But the main obstacle which stands in the way of free and effective mobilization of the full weight of India's manpower and resources for the defence of the country against Japanese fascist invaders, for defending the vital and urgent interests of the people in the war, is the autocratic rule of the British government. The British imperialist rulers cannot and will not defend us or our country. This defence requires the free and democratic mobilization of the people and a reorganization of the National economy for a Peoples' War and in the peoples' interest. This requires the recognition of India's freedom, the establishment of a National government in India enjoying the confidence of the people and democratic liberties. Imperialists refuse to yield to these demands and will continue to do so until they are forced by the pressure of the unity and the mobilization of the people.

Forge National Unity & Mass Sanctions

7. The All-India Kisan Council, therefore, declares that the urgent and immediate task before the Indian people is to achieve the broadest unity of all the political parties and organizations of the people, which stand for the independence of the country, for communal amity and understanding, and for the voluntary, free and effective participation of the Indian people in

the world war against fascism and for freedom. The purpose of this joint front should be to forge mass sanctions by mobilizing the masses through parliamentary and extra-parliamentary actions, for securing immediately the recognition of India's independence, National government, and democratic liberties.

Joint Front—Its Basis

8. It is the considered opinion of the All-India Kisan Sabha that the grave emergency which faces the nation to-day demands that the National Congress the premier organization of the Indian people must take initiative in coming to an understanding with the Muslim League, to achieve a joint front for mass action to secure the demands of the people in the war. The basis of the joint front should be the recognition of the present war as our own war of liberation, the acceptance of the war aims of the Soviet Union and of the progressive forces as our own war aims, and the determination to forge jointly mass sanctions to secure peoples' control over the war in a order to win it for the people and in their interest.

Demand of the Joint Front

9. The demands of the joint front should be:

- (i) Recognition of India's right to complete independence;
- (ii) Formation of a National Government at the Centre, responsible to the legislature and commanding the confidence of the people, and having full power over all spheres of government and administration and of the conduct of war;
- (iii) Release of all political prisoners, detenus, establishment of democratic liberties, the withdrawal of all emergency legislations restricting freedom of speech, press, organisation, movement and right to strike;
- (iv) Policy of rapid industrialization and forcing the pace of industrial production to supply the demands of war and defence and the needs of the people;
- (v) Granting of workers' demands, the amelioration of the burden of debts, rents and taxes, prices control in their interest and the generous remission to flood and famine-stricken areas, special aid to increase food grain production, to promote such handicraft production as required to replace shortage of goods due to war (e.g., handloom industry).
- (vi) No coercion of any form in any type of war effort;
- (vii) Equitable distribution of war burdens.

Plan of Action

10. The plan of action of the joint front should be:

- (a) to run an all-India mass campaign of meetings and demonstrations, bringing home to the people the significance of the peoples' stage of the war, showing how the issue of India's liberation now becomes a part of the struggle for world liberation fought in common by the progressive forces of the world. The purpose of the campaign is to rouse the people to support the demands set forth above, the realization of which is essential for the people's effective participation in the war;
- (b) to form stable joint ministries in the provinces pledged to support and implement as far as lies in their power the demands set forth above and to support the extra-parliamentary mass movement for their full realization.

Appeal to Congress & League

11. The All-India Kisan Council appeals to the leadership of the Congress as well as to that of the Muslim league to come forward unitedly before the people and give them a positive lead for action. If they do so, they could release a powerful united National mass upsurge the like of which our country has never seen before. It is the imperialist government which is to-day in crisis and quandary. It cannot but bend before this powerful mass activity. The advanced sections of the British working class and people are pressing upon their government to liberate the Indian people to join the common struggle against the Japanese and Hitler fascism. The end of the autocratic repressive rule of the British imperialist in India has now become a life and death question equally to the Indian and to the British people. The joint effort of the Indian and British people cannot but smash the rotten and obsolete structure of British autocratic rule and enable the Indian people to defend their country and win their independence in fraternal alliance with the progressive peoples of the world.

Tasks of the Kisan Workers

12. The All-India Kisan calls upon the provincial Kisan Sabhas and Kisan workers to popularize this policy among the kisans under the following main slogans:

- This is our war for National freedom and for world freedom—we must take it in our own hands.
- Congress–League unity—to achieve National Government for our Nation’s War.
- Kisan Sabhas and Kisan workers should fully co-operate with and work in the People’s Volunteer Brigades started under Congress auspices, to assist to organize the village population to meet any emergency that may arise in the course of the growing war menace.
- Wherever possible independent kisan guards should be formed. They should explain the significance of the war to the villagers, allay panic, help them in the case of air raids and generally help the kisan in every way to meet any emergency arising out of war.
- Kisan workers should co-operate with the ‘Friends of the Soviet’ movement and popularize through it the achievements of the Soviet Union and its liberationist role in the war.
- Kisan workers should co-operate in the ‘Release our patriots for our Peoples’ War’ campaign and demand release of kisan fighters.
- Kisan workers must remain in the forefront exposing and fighting against coercive war efforts and make these the basis for popularizing the demand: ‘Peoples’ War must be in Peoples’ Hands.’
- Kisan workers must organize fraternization meetings and demonstrations for Indian soldiers and recruits from their village, in which the significance of the war should be explained, the soldiers and recruits greeted as our soldiers of freedom, the demands of the Indian soldiers put forward and supported by the village. The slogan ‘National Government for our National War’ should be popularized.
- Kisan workers must be in the forefront, co-operating with all parties in the fight for the demands and for the relief of the peasantry and village artisans caught in the grip of floods, famines and price crisis. Arson and looting can only be prevented by giving organized expression to the struggle of the crisis-stricken rural popularization.

In case of arson and looting actually taking place kisan workers must take initiative in organizing relief and defence of the accused and their families.

21. 'Forward to Freedom': A New Book Explaining the Change in the Party Line

CPI Party Letter, Vol. 2, No. 3, 4 March 1942, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

FORWARD TO FREEDOM

INDIA IN THE WAR OF LIBERATION

(By Hansraj—March, 1942—Price Re. 1/-)

A Welcome Publication

Here is at last a book which supplies an urgently felt need by all political workers in India. At a time when the danger of foreign invasion grows hourly, when the menace of fascist enslavement hangs like a Damocles' sword on the heads of our people, at such a time every earnest patriot wants to know: what is the way out? In this book is set forth in a simple, straight forward and forceful manner the Communist way out—the path which the Communists are putting forward as the only possible and revolutionary policy for the Indian people in the present phase of the war. The Communist Party's policy was put forward in the All-India Students' Federation Conference at Patna (Dec. 1941), in the Wardha Session of the A.I.C.C. (Jan. 1942), in the All-India Trade Union Congress at Cawnpore and at the All-India Kisan Council Session at Nagpur in February, 1942. Some articles have appeared in the press which have not been satisfactory at all. So far no full and exhaustive and correct statement of the communist policy and their plan of action was available for the public and the political workers to study.

Authoritative and Correct

This is an authoritative publication of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India. It is written in the form of a report speech on the new, revised resolution of the Polit Bureau entitled, 'India in the War of Liberation' which is printed separately. In March, 1940 the Communists brought forward the 'Proletarian Path' and the publication, 'Unmasked—Parties and Politics'. In the imperialist phase of the war, these publications served to popularize the basic slogans and the policy of the Communist Party of India for that period among the people. These became a weapon in the hands of the Communists and their co-workers, which helped them to carry forward and popularize these slogans among the masses, to carry out that policy. It is hoped that the resolution and the Letter to Party Comrades which is printed separately, as well as this publication should serve a similar purpose and play a similar role in the new period.

Why This Introduction?

This brief introduction to these publications is in the main addressed to Party Members and sympathizers, who have studied the previous Party documents on the New Line, especially the Note from the Jail comrades and the P.B. Resolution of 13th December 1941. Our purpose is to draw the readers' pointed attention to the fact that these new publications correct some fundamental errors and deviations which were contained in the Jail documents and which were to a certain extent, reflected in the P.B. Resolution (13.12.41) itself. Our jailed leaders rendered

an inestimable service to the Party by producing a document which enabled us to make the turn from a wrong line and in the direction of the right one. But they did this with an analysis and arguments which contained some basic errors. The result was that the agitational approach as well as the practice which followed from it was wrong. This was discovered during the course of further discussion inside the Party as well as on the basis of the practical results.

In this introduction, we will only point out where there new publications differ criticism of these documents cannot be presented here. The object here is to bring out the main points which have been corrected and show how and where they were wrong.

What 22nd June Revealed?

When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union on the 22nd June, 1941 in the midst of the Second Imperialist war, a transformation takes place in the entire international situation, in the situation in every country. The first thing to be grasped about this transformation is that it revealed as if in one flash, the complete bankruptcy of the imperialist bourgeoisie. It revealed in what insoluble conflicts and crisis they had landed themselves. Simultaneously it revealed that a mighty base was created for a worldwide unity of the peoples which could now fight the war against Hitler-Fascism and its allies as an anti-fascist war of liberation of all the peoples, under the leadership of the Soviet Union. That Hitler who in August 1939 dared not attack the Soviet Union, now found himself strong enough to do so certainly showed the weakness of the working class and the peoples of the capitalist world. In fact, the outbreak of the Second Imperialist War itself revealed this weakness. The working class and the peoples of the capitalist world were not able to forge that anti-fascist peoples' unity which was necessary to defeat the fascist aggressors and their abettors, in alliance with the Soviet Union. They were, therefore, also unable to forge that unity to end the imperialist war. But this was only one aspect of the question and was by itself only a half-truth. The other and the more decisive aspect of the question was that Hitler's attack revealed the deepest and acutest crisis of the world bourgeoisie, and that it created the basis of the mightiest rally and counter assault of the workers and the peoples of the world against fascist imperialism. What was a battle for world domination between two rival blocs of imperialism became transformed, with the entry of the U.S.S.R., into a battle waged by the peoples of the world, under Soviet leadership, for their own liberation, for the defence of the U.S.S.R., for the destruction of fascist imperialism which was seeking to enslave the whole world.

Root of Panic and Defeatism

In 1933, when Hitler-fascism rose to power in Germany, Comrade Stalin had evaluated the situation similarly. He said, 'Hitler's victory did show the weakness of the proletariat but let it not be forgotten that it showed hundred times more the weakness of the bourgeoisie! This applies to the situation that is developing since Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union with an added force. Hitler's blow did not fall upon an unprepared Soviet Union. It was expected and well prepared for before and during the period of the non-aggression pact. But there are some who look at the situation as nothing but one of weakness of the proletariat and of the USSR. They fail to see the deep crisis and quandary of world imperialism as a whole. They underestimate the new political role of the USSR and of the gigantic world peoples' unity. They view the situation with panic and defeatism. They say: The Soviet Union—the only country where the proletariat held power is now attacked. Let us thank our stars that the imperialist governments of Britain and America have been forced to ally themselves with the USSR to defend their empires. Let us first fight back and defeat the Axis powers in alliance with imperialism, without raising

other issues, and then pass on to the offensive against imperialism as a whole for achieving Socialism. Such is the outlook of those who look at the new situation with panic and defeatism.

To look at the new alignment as ‘an alliance with imperialism’ as a ‘united front extending to the imperialism government’, which is essential to defend the Soviet Union, and which requires that the issue of independence of the oppressed nations be relegated to the background for the present in order ‘not to break the front’—all this is the politics of panic and defeatism and has nothing in common with Bolshevism. But it is just this tone which rings out of the analysis and the arguments of the Jail document. It is just this tone which also peeps out of the P.B. Resolution of 13th December 1941.

Outlook of Stalinist Internationalism

But such is not the outlook of Stalinist proletarian internationalism. The situation which came into existence with the attack of Hitler was not one of quandary for the world proletariat and the peoples, in which they had to ‘heave a sigh of relief’ at the ‘political windfall’ of Britain and America allying with the USSR. On the other hand, it was a situation of the gravest and acutest crisis of the imperialist bourgeoisie as a whole, bringing about sharp division in their ranks internationally and nationally, a situation which has created the conditions for the mightiest alliance of the peoples of the world under Soviet leadership for effectively utilizing this division, and for destroying the fascist imperialist aggressors and achieving the liberation of all the peoples of the world.

Comrades Stalin and Molotov have in their historic speeches, persistently underlined with supreme confidence the world liberationist character of the war. Hitler’s attack upon the USSR was a gamble against the class revolution. He failed. He hoped to create a world front against Bolshevism. He got instead a world front of the peoples fighting for their freedom under Soviet leadership and for the utter destruction of fascism. The war which the Soviet people are waging for the defence of their land of Socialism, will merge with the war of the peoples of Europe, America and Asia for their independence and democratic liberties. Destruction of fascism and the liberation of all the peoples of the world was the war aim of the Soviet Union. This was the meaning of the transformation. This is how Stalinist internationalism looked at it.

How This Book Presents It

The analysis and arguments presented in this book to describe and prove the transformation of the character of the war correspond to reality. There is no empty juggling with the categories of imperialism fascism and Socialism. The analysis goes to the root of the matter, to the new regrouping of the class-forces that lead to the transformation of June 22nd and that has developed since. It shows the growing split and the crisis in the bourgeois ruling circles. It shows the invincible growth of peoples’ unity throughout the world under Soviet leadership, under the stress of war. It shows how the proletariat has to broaden out the anti-fascist war as a war of peoples’ liberation all round, fighting back anti-liberationist sections of the bourgeoisie in the effort. For, as the war progresses, it becomes clearer and clearer that the war against world fascism can only be won as a war of peoples’ liberation and that the three objectives: destruction of fascism, the liberation of all the peoples of the world and the defence of the Soviet Union—all merge into one single task. This is the first distinctive feature of the international analysis given in this book. This is where it corrects the deviations of the Jail documentation of the first P.B. Resolution.

‘Class Analysis’ in Jail Documents?

The Jail comrades set out to give us an analysis of the new situation in terms of class positions. But actually they failed to do it. They gave us a very superficial ‘analysis’ in terms of ‘Imperialism’, ‘fascism’ and world proletariat. It ran something like this; Nazi victories in Europe had weakened British Imperialism immensely, called its very existence into question. ‘British imperialism was no longer a gatherer of world reaction. Its aim for the sake of its own safety, could no longer be immediate destruction of Nazism at a time when the latter was organizing for an attack on the USSR’. The world proletariat in order to defend the Soviet Union had also to concentrate its main fire against Nazism. The task before the world proletariat was to utilize one imperialism against another to save the Soviet Union, ‘if this temporarily helps one imperialism against another, it nonetheless weakens it against the international proletariat’. ‘Irrespective of the fact that certain imperialist powers are interested in fighting Nazism out of imperialist motives, the issue involved—the safety of the USSR—is a class issue, an issue for the millions, and makes the war a peoples’ war notwithstanding British participation. It is the war of the international working class to defend Socialism and safeguard the future revolutionary movements.’

We have reproduced almost in their own words the gist of the main argument by which the Jail comrades proved the character of the war. Its real implications must be clearly grasped. Herein lies the root of the error which has gone down among our ranks. It is the basis of the mistakes which our comrades are committing, mistakes which make them appear as Royists, mistakes which isolate them from the nationalist-minded masses and prevent them coming forward as the leaders and UNIFIERS OF the people behind the policy of entering into the war of national defence and liberation. That is why this root of the error must be clearly grasped.

Not Marxist Leninist but Machiavellian Strategy

The strategy they put before us is not that of the proletariat nor of Marxism Leninism. It looks more like bourgeois-Machiavellian strategy, devoid of class analysis. They tell us in all seriousness that ‘the international role of British imperialism has temporarily changed.’ That is why we have to temporarily ally ourselves with imperialism to defend the Soviet Union. The world proletariat is cornered. It has to defend its Fortress of Socialism. It finds that British imperialism is impelled by its own need to destroy Nazism. Hence it utilizes this alliance against its main enemy. We are told, the question of independence of the colonies must be raised now. It will ruin the alliance. Later the document applies the ‘logic of the united front’ to the front which now includes the British imperialist government. We are told, the proletariat ‘takes initiatives in preventing cross-firing’, which means the question of the independence of colonies is not to be raised or else it may break the front. We are even told that the International had in the anti-fascist period even agreed not to raise the question of the independence of colonies in the interest of a broad anti-fascist front.

Where It Leads To?

All this is certainly not class analysis of the present situation nor has it anything to do with Marxism Leninism. It is more akin to right opportunism of the Royist type. It is Royist ‘internationalism’ which says: Imperialism is playing a progressive role on the international plane; we defend the USSR and destroy fascism in alliance with it, and then opens the phase of world revolution when the fight for national and social freedom will begin all over the world, where does this type of internationalism lead to? It leads to reliance upon imperialism and

not upon the proletariat. It fails to grasp the international role of the Soviet Union of the 40's, of victorious Socialism, of the Soviet Union which can now come forward as the leader and unifier of the peoples and nations fighting against the fascist world enslaver. It fails to grasp the role which the proletariat in each country has to play as the leader and unifier of the people to lead them forward to full co-operation with the USSR, towards a victorious war against fascism, despite the reactionary imperialist sabotage. That is why such an analysis leads to a policy based on 'the political windfall' of imperialist alliance and not upon the invincible might of the USSR, the champion of the freedom of nations, the leader in the anti-fascist peoples' war, and upon the unifying revolutionary role of the proletariat in every country.

Failure to Grasp Stalin's Lead

Our Jail comrades certainly did not want to follow the Royist Line nor did they want us to do it. The deviation arises out of the failure to understand the full significance of the transformation of June 22nd. Comrade Stalin summed up the essence of the new situation and its future development in a few pregnant sentences of his historic speech of July 3rd. He said that the war which the Soviet Union was waging would merge with the war of the peoples of Europe and America fighting for their independence and democratic liberties against enslavement of the threat of enslavement by fascist armies. On November 6, 1941, he emphasized the fact that it was a war of liberation for the peoples of Asia as well and pointed out the example of Iran. Comrade Stalin and the Soviet leaders have summed up the new situation in a very simple way:

1. With Hitler's attack upon the USSR and the alliance of Britain and America with the Soviet Union, the whole world situation is fundamentally altered. Hitler Fascism and its allies now become the main enemies of all mankind; they are waging a war for world domination and are threatening the peoples of the whole world with fascist enslavement.

2. The war which the Soviet Union is waging against the fascist invaders now merges with the war the peoples of the world are waging for their independence and democratic liberties and against fascist enslavement and its menace. In other words the war waged by the peoples of the world, led by the Soviet Union ... is a world war of all peoples' liberation and can only be victorious as such.

Two Main Factors

Wherein does Comrade Stalin see the main and principal weapon of the defence of the Soviet Union, and for the destruction of the fascist gangsters? He sees it in two things: firstly, in the invincible might of the Soviet Union, the indomitable unity of its people, which is the product of 'the final and irrevocable victory of Socialism' in the Soviet Union; and secondly, in the united front of the peoples of the world rallying round the Soviet in their fight for liberation from fascist enslavement. There is a third favourable factor which ensures the victory of the USSR and of the peoples of the world over the fascist world enslavers. It is the crisis and quandary of the world bourgeoisie, the cleavage in the camp of their ruling circles on a world and on a national plane. But let it be remembered that the world proletariat can effectively utilize the antagonisms in the camp of imperialism in the international as well as in the home arena only by firmly relying on the two main factors mentioned above.

Key to Proletariat's Grand Strategy

To forget the two main factors and to imagine that the defence of the Soviet Union and the victory over the fascist aggressors can be secured only by making 'one imperialism fight another'

is not Marxism–Leninism. It cannot lead either to a correct and full understanding of the new situation nor to the working out of correct agitational and practical line for each country. This is exactly what has happened in the Jail document. These documents do not characterize the war against the fascist aggressors as a war of all peoples' liberation, led by the Soviet Union, which can only be won as such. That is why they fail to bring out the crucial fact that the struggle to concentrate the main fire on the fascist aggressors, the struggle to utilise the antagonisms in the camp of the imperialists is simultaneously the struggle for uniting the peoples of the world in a single front of a liberationist war under Soviet leadership. It is the struggle for uniting the people in every country for the defence of the nation, for the freedom of the people for the final victory over fascism in collaboration with the USSR. It is the struggle for isolating and crushing the pro-fascist and anti-liberationist elements in the ruling circles of the countries ranged against the fascist aggressors. This is a war for world liberation under Soviet leadership, and that it can only be won by its becoming a world-wide peoples' war of liberation for every people—this sums up the grand strategy which the Soviet Union, and the Communist Parties throughout the world are developing to win the war against the fascist aggressors.

Crux of Soviet Political Lead

What is the crux of the political strategy of the Soviet Union in this war? It is to bring about the world front of the peoples' war against the fascist aggressors. It is to make this front a very broad one, to draw in it 'social groups classes, and nations, which are not adherents of proletarian dictatorship, or adherents of the social revolutions.' The war aims which the Soviet Union champions in this war correspond to this need. These are, the annihilation of the Hitlerite criminals, the liberation of all the peoples, the achievement of a peace which ensures to every people its independence and democratic liberties. It is by coming forward as the gigantic leading force fighting for these liberationist aims that the Soviet Union unites the peoples of the world in a victorious war against the fascist enslavers, and at the same time, isolating those groups in the ruling class in the imperialist counties which seek to carry on pro-fascist and anti-liberationist policies. When pro-fascist agents tried to spread the disruptive propaganda that the Soviet Union wants to Bolshevise Europe, Comrade Lozovsky gave it a crushing rebuff. He said: The Soviet Union fights to liberate every people from the grip of the fascist enslavers, and want to see that the people take their destiny into their own hands. It is for every people to choose to build whatever social order they want. Comrade Stalin in his speech on Nov. 6th 1941, underlined the same point. Let it be clearly understood that the war for the defence of the Soviet Union is simultaneously the war for the freedom of all the peoples. It has to be won and can be won on that basis alone. DESTRUCTION OF FASCISM, LIBERATION OF ALL THE PEOPLES, THE DEFENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION—THESE ARE THE THREE INSERPARABLE AIMS OF THE WAR. NOT 'ALLIANCE WITH IMPERIALISM' BUT A GRAND FREEDOM ALLIANCE OF THE PEOPELS OF THE WORLD, A STRUGGLE TO ISOLATE AND ELIMINATE THE OPEN AND CONCEALED IMPERIALIST AND ANTI-LIBERATIONIST ELEMENT FROM THE BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENTS ALLIED WITH THE USSR- THIS IS THE CRUX OF SOVIET STRATEGY TO WIN THE WAR AGAINST FASCISM. Let it not be forgotten that the victory in this war of world liberation, will not only mean the destruction of fascism and the liquidation of world empires, but it will also mean the extension of world of Socialism. But it is hardly necessary to speculate on this perspective. For the only way to open it is to here and now do everything to win the war of liberation.

Communist Tactics in Capitalist Countries

That the war is now a war of liberation of all the peoples who are directly under fascist enslavement or are menaced by it, and that it can only be won by fighting it as a peoples' war in every country in the closest collaboration with the Soviet Union, these two facts determine generally the tactical and agitational slogans of the Communist parties in every country ranged against the fascist powers. The Communist Party in an imperialist country, in Britain, for instance seeks to build the united national front in its own country behind the three slogans: (i) all-out effort to defeat Hitler, to defend the freedom and the democratic liberties of the people of Britain against the menace of fascist armies (ii) a 100% collaboration with the USSR in the joint war (iii) liberation of colonies and of India to strengthen the world front of freedom against fascism. These three demands correspond to the urgent and vital interests of the British people. This is proved by the mass upsurge that is welling up in Great Britain during the last eight months behind these slogans. The Communist Party fights for these demands by leading a powerful peoples' effort to raise production, to win the war. The Communist party's fight to raise the united national front behind these slogans is at the same time a fight to throw out the pro-fascist and anti-liberationist elements from the government.

The Policy of the British Party

The Communist Party of Britain does not say: British Imperialism is an ally, we must not raise the question of independence of India; that would scare away the imperialists and we would not get the military help we need to defend the USSR. This banality is worthy of the Royists and of the Social-Democratic leaders. The C.P.G.B. recognizes the rapidly growing cleavage in the ranks of the British ruling circles and forges the wedge of the united national front of the people to drive in the cleavage and to expel the reactionary, and imperialist elements from the government. The tactical line and the mobilizing slogans of the C.P.G.B have met with a great success. This is proved by the fast moving developments in Britain. They correspond to the best interests of the British people and to the interests of the defence of the USSR as well. With Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union and British Government's alliance with the USSR, Britain's war against Hitler becomes for the British proletariat and the British people a war of national liberation, a war in the defence of their independence and democratic liberties against the menace of fascist invasion. British proletariat can only win it by uniting the British people for achieving the closest cooperation with the Soviet Union, for converting it into a war of liberation also for the Indian and colonial people. In other words, the British proletariat cannot win the war for the British and for the Soviet peoples unless they direct the wedge of peoples' unity against the pro-fascists in the Government who hinder all-out effort in co-operation with the USSR, and against the imperialists who prevent the liberation of India and the colonies.

Where Jail Documents Fail

The Jail documents look at the question of the defence of the Soviet Union as an isolated issue. They imagine that the world proletariat can solve it by utilizing 'the political windfall' of the alliance of the imperialist governments with the USSR and by merely bringing pressure upon these governments to give full military aid to the Soviet. They look upon Hitler-fascism as the main enemy only because it has attacked the USSR and not because it is the leader of the Axis powers also, which are threatening the peoples of the whole world without fascist enslavement. They miss the whole class significance of the perspective which Comrade Stalin outlined in

his speeches. Comrade Stalin was neither talking with the tongue in his cheek nor indulging in mere propaganda, when he said that the war of the Soviet people will emerge with the war of liberation of the peoples of the whole world against the menace of fascist enslavement. That was just how war against fascism had to be won, and the Soviet to be defended. The struggle which the proletariat in every country is waging for winning the war against fascism and for the defence of the USSR, was a political struggle. It was a struggle for unifying the people, for taking the war into its own hands, for making it a PEOPLES' WAR after the Soviet and Chinese model, for fighting back pro-fascist and anti-liberationist elements in the ruling class. It was not just a struggle to bring pressure upon the government to give full and effective military aid to the Soviet Union. This is just the reason why the Jail documents are unable to give the Party correct agitational slogans and a correct tactical line which would enable it to place itself at the head of the people, unifying them for the defence of the country, for its freedom, for winning the war of liberation for itself and for the Soviet and for the world. The P.B. Resolution (of 13.12.41) does work out correct agitational slogans and emphasizes the key task of achieving national unity. It mentions that it is a war of liberation but fails to make that the central thesis, and that is why it too drifts back into arguments, reminiscent of 'alliance with imperialism'.

How This Book Corrects

In the present book, all this confusion is cleared up. The starting point here is the Stalinist thesis, that the Soviet's war is the war of liberation for all the peoples. That is why the question, how it is India's war, is simply answered, because it is India's war for her own liberation. The author of this book does not raise the conundrum of how the national oppressor has become an international ally. He simply says, the Indian people and their great political parties have to unite to take control of the war into their own hands from the hand of the imperialist autocracy. He does not say that British imperialism is our international ally and so we must not raise the issue of independence now and split the anti-fascist front. On the other hand, he points out how it is the imperialist reactionaries in the British Government who by refusing to release India for freedom, are weakening the anti-fascist front of the peoples. He gives us the correct agitational slogans which would enable our party to swing our people as a broad national front into the war of liberation. This he is able to do because he is not hampered by the incorrect idea of maintaining a 'united front extending to the imperialist bureaucratic government' and 'preventing cross-firing'. He puts forward the correct agitational slogan because he starts from the correct tactical line. The key task, he points out, is to unite the people and the political parties on the basis of the realization that this is our own war, the war of our national defence, the war of our national freedom, which we have to take into our own hands.

Correct Tactical Line for India

The author points out how in the period of the imperialist phase of the war, the whole nation and its principal parties stood out. True, the national bourgeois leadership did not move the masses against the imperialist war. On the other hand, they sabotaged the mass struggles and kept the whole national front in a state of animated suspension, hoping for a compromise. But there was no surrender to imperialism on the part of any major party. Today, when the character of the war has changed, when the menace of fascist Japanese invasion hourly grows, when it is urgently required that these parties should move to unite themselves and the nation to snatch the war out of the hands of imperialist bureaucracy, they again sit and wait, expecting a gesture

from imperialism. Can we say that the leadership of these parties is all pro-fascist and they are now waiting to make peace with the Japanese fascists, expecting freedom at their hands? No, this cannot be said of the bulk of our national leadership. On the other hand, we clearly see a cleavage in the ranks of the leadership. A progressive democratic section does realise the new character of the war as a war of liberation and wants to see India ranged on the side of the Soviet Union and China to fight for her own liberation as well as that of the world. But it too waits helplessly on imperialism's gesture. It does not see the changed and immensely favourable situation when a national mass upsurge led by the untied leadership of the country could at once make the Indian people masters of their home, and controllers of their own war. It does not see the weakness of imperialism the strength of the powerful allies our freedom's movement has in Great Britain, America, Soviet Union and China. If the national Congress were to take the initiative to forge a broad national unity by arriving at a united front agreement with the Muslim League and other parties and organizations, it could lead to a gigantic mass upsurge. It could sweep away the obstacles which the imperialist government today places in the way of the Indian peoples' urge to unite with the progressive forces of the world to secure its own liberation. There are two powerful factors which favour such a development. First is the sound patriotic instincts of our people and parties, born of 30 years of mass national upsurge. Second is the utter bankruptcy and the complete isolation of the British imperialist government in India from every section of the people. Its prestige is gone. It cannot defend the country against the foreign invaders. In England, the broad sections of the people are growing daily more and more impatient with the wooden-headed imperialist policy of its government which prevents the Indian people from defending their own country and thus creating a situation which can only result in strengthening the fascist enemy and endangering the freedom of the British people themselves.

In short in this extremely favourable and urgent situation it is the job of the Communist Party to come forward with such agitational slogans, with such campaigns of action which will enable them to rouse the patriotic feelings of the people, wake up to the urgency of the situation and make the whole country ring with one single slogan—UNITY—UNITY—UNITY. It is the job of the Communist Party to lead the way for Unity.

For national unity of people and parties to defend the country,

- national unity to take the nation's war into nation's hands,
- national unity to win National Government,
- national unity to organize the nation's war of defence against the would be invaders as a peoples' war after the Chinese and Soviet model,
- national unity for winning the war of national liberation in common with the Soviet, with China and with the other peoples of the world.

Tasks Facing Communists

Communists must realise that we are facing the most critical time in our country's history. The menace of foreign invasion, the menace of disruption of our country, of fascist enslavement moves daily nearer. The one job before the Communists today is to come forward as the unifiers of the people. Thorough their explanations, their agitation, their campaigns of action, they must lead the masses to the realization that there is only one way open to the Indian people and their political parties, that is, TO SINK THEIR DIFFERENCES, TO UNITE IN ONE SUPRME EFFORT TO REPEL THE INVADER, TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY,

TO WIN COUNTRY'S LIBERATION. To fail to unite today to break the stalemate and to defeat the obstinate policy of the government on the basis of the strength of the people is to pave the way for our country's disruption. The Communists must learn to put across their line of 'National Unity to take nation's war into the own hands' in a manner which must strike a sympathetic chord in the heart of every patriot. We have to lead the people to our position through their own experience, through their nationalist consciousness. You cannot put across the line by occasionally staging small demonstrations under the slogans—'Soviet War Peoples' War—Peoples' War our War'. Nor can you do it by merely demonstrating for 'Open the New Front to Aid the Soviet'.

Anti-Japanese Agitation

What we need is a persistent anti-Japanese aggression agitation among all sections of the people. In every strike meeting, in every workers', students' and kisans' meeting, anti-Japanese agitation must be conducted, exposing Japanese atrocities, Japanese imperialists' predatory imperialist aims. The one thing we have to fight against is the complacency and defeatism spread by disruptors, who whisper 'What can we do and after all, Japanese can't be much worse than the British.' Our agitation against Japanese aggression must be coupled with fraternization with the Chinese people. China has shown us how a united national movement enables even a poorly armed people to hold back a superior foe for 5 years, to inspire the national to wage a fierce peoples' war. What China could do India can and in spite of her present slavery. India must immediately build its fighting national unity to smash the imperialist obstacle which prevents it from taking its war of defence into its own hands. If she does so, she can then multiply the strength of that unity a hundred fold and beat the Japanese invader back.

Struggle for Unity

Through Anti-Japanese campaign, through India-China alliance campaign, through the Friends of the Soviet Union movement, the Communists must seek to rally ever wider mass of people and all sections behind the single slogan: 'Unite the parties and lead the people to make the war our own, to defend the country, to win freedom.'

Communists must realise that the task of the defence of the Soviet Union today merges with the task of uniting the people to enter our own war of national defence, of smashing imperialist obstacles to it. For if we fail to unite the nation to resist the Japanese invaders, we would be only strengthening Japan to attack the USSR. By forging national unity for our national war of defence against Japanese aggression, we aid and defend both the Soviet Union and China just as they aid and defend us by fighting their own war. Such is the logic of the world war of liberation.

Not Arguments but Lead for Unity

Communists come forward everywhere taking the initiative to co-operate in Civil Defence, in protecting the people and in allaying panic in cities and in villages, independently and in collaboration with the national parties. Communists must realise that they cannot put across their line by merely arguing. Communists must learn to carry on their mass agitation, which appeals to the patriotic instincts of the people and leads them towards unity. They must organize mass campaign for the release of prisoners, for Aid to the Soviet and China, and against Japanese aggression, securing the co-operation of all parties, and leading the people to the realization for the urgency of unity for the war of national defence.

These are the immediate tasks which face the Communists today. They have to address themselves to them, with a clear conception of the whole line and with a correct grasp of the tactical line, with the correct agitational slogans. This is just what this book should give them. Let them read it carefully, think over the analysis and arguments advanced therein. Let them clearly understand where they got the line wrong and what fundamental errors of the Jail documents and of the first P.B. Resolution this book corrects. If they do it, they will find that this book will serve the same purpose for our movement that the 'proletariat path' and the 'Unmasked—Politics and Parties' served in the imperialist phase of the war.

22. CPI Position regarding Possible Japanese Invasion of India, 7 March 1942

CPI Party Letter, Vol. 2, No. 4, Ajoy Bhawan, New Delhi.

Party Letter

FOR MEMBERS ONLY

PRICE 4 ANNAS

VOL. 2, NO. 4

TO ALL PARTY UNITS

7TH MARCH, 1942

TO ALL PARTY MEMBERS

Our Testing Time

Dear Comrades,

We are addressing this letter to you at the gravest time in the life of our country. The fascist invader is madly rushing towards our sacred land. The entire political atmosphere is surcharged with political uncertainty, anxiety and expectancy. WHAT IS THE IMMEDIATE PERSPECTIVE FACING US?

After the fall of Singapore, our country is in imminent danger of foreign invasion. After the battle of Burma is over (within a month to two months), a full-scale invasion is almost certain.

The Jap-fascists however may any day advance to the coastal towns of West Burma, Akyab, etc. and the eastern towns of Bengal. They may attack the Ceylon naval base at Trincomalee as a prelude to the invasion of the South-Madras, Vizag, Cochin etc. Attack on Ceylon can begin any day. The moment the battle of Rangoon is over, the fascists are likely to begin a large-scale offensive of our Eastern provinces—Bengal and Assam. Thus the Eastern Coast, like Bombay, is not ruled out.

Our Party had the honour to visualize this situation and call upon the premier national organization of our people—the National Congress—to acclaim the all-peoples; war as the war of the nation, to go all-out to unite with the League and hurl our national unity against imperialist autocracy and take the peoples' war in peoples' hands. At Wardha we did not succeed. The national leadership dismissed it as the war of others and waited for Imperialism to make the next move before it will call upon our great nation to act. Valuable months have passed by, our people have felt utterly helpless. The fascist danger has come nearer and nearer. The fate of our nation remains in the hands of the imperialist autocracy, which is visibly sinking before our own eyes.

The threatened invasion of India, however, is no ordinary event. It has already produced worldwide repercussions, so closely-knit is the fate of all the nations to-day. Our Party with our

effective top and middle leadership locked up in Jails, was too weak to move the Congress, unable to get the nation take its fate in its own hands, unable to fulfill its rule as the unifier of the people. We failed to get our own people intervene in the peoples' war and make it their own war. Where we failed, the Chinese people and the British people did not fail, so closely knit is the camp of the peoples today. The grave menace to India led the British people to intervene, led to the Cabinet reshuffle, leading to a reconsideration of the Indian policy of the British Government. It led to the political intervention on the side of the Indian people of the Chinese United National Front through its leader, Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek's visit to India. At the time of writing, the announcement of the British Cabinet's policy on India is not yet out. But it seems almost certain that some sort of a National Government will come, and a tentative settlement of the Indian problem.

India is no small country, it is a vast sub-continent. We are not helpless we have a proud national movement. India cannot go down before the Jap-fascists without a struggle worthy of our country's great name. India cannot and will not go the Malayan way, it is our job to see that it goes the China way. This is the objective reality, such is our immediate task.

In the meanwhile, let us not forget that our defence has been in imperialist hands. We are completely unprepared, both politically and militarily. It is not unlikely that parts of our beloved motherland in the East and the South may be over-run before the nation is able to rally the people to stem the fascist Comrades! We are on the eve of a situation when fascist invasion threatens to engulf us, when the peoples' war is not yet in the hands of our people, when our fellow-patriots await helplessly for events but they are rapidly awakening to the reality of the situation, when their own experience is leading them to accept the peoples' war line, when the peoples of China and Britain are acting to put our war in our hands. Very soon the situation will be clearer. Very soon our testing time will be upon us. It will be the testing-time of the Indian Communists more than any other group in India's national life. We will have to prove our worth in daily, hourly actions. We will have to prove the worth of our patriotism by being the FIRST to go all-out to fight the fascists. We will have to demonstrate our love for our people by being on duty all 24 hours organizing their protection. We will have to prove our influence over the masses by being most eloquent and most untiring in rallying them to a man for the holy war against the fascist invaders. We will be doing all this in unity with all our fellow-patriots. The eyes of all will be upon us. Not a little will depend upon our deeds.

Such a prospect may come upon us sooner than we realize to-day. It will be idle day-dreaming to wait for it. We have to work from now on to realize it we have to rise equal to the great occasion and bend all our energies to one single task—awaken our people to the consciousness of the supreme issues that face us today, unite all the forces of the nation to take the peoples' war in peoples' hands and thus prepare ourselves to meet and crush the fascist invader and realize India's liberation.

Educate Yourself 'Anew'

Comrades, the Party leadership is sending you some very important documents on the peoples' war policy and our tasks—Party Letters and Party Organisers detailing urgent tasks, the final text of the P.B. Resolution on Peoples' War Policy and the Report of the P.B.—Hansraj's pamphlet, 'Forward to Freedom'.

They have been written after lots of inner-Party discussion and experiences in carrying out the new line. They are meant to end the period of discussion and begin the period of action

for the new line. They are written in a simple straightforward manner. Your FIRST task is to study them.

You will see at a glance that they are meant not only to clarify and explain the peoples' war policy but materially correct the errors of some previous documents. The peoples' war policy is simplicity itself, one you grasp the implications of the transformation of 22nd June, once you understand the full significance of the role of the USSR as the world liberator, once you grasp how the people from being pawns of imperialists, have become the makers of their own fate, in short, once you realize that you are in a completely new period of world history, away from the horrors and helplessness of the imperialist war, and in the midst of the glory and travail of the peoples' war.

You must GET CLEAR ON SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF THE NEW SITUATION.

- Get away from the idea that the peoples' war is an alliance with one section of imperialism to defeat another. Get it clear that the peoples' war is the struggle against world imperialism as a whole. Fascism is not separate from Imperialism. World Imperialism as a whole has reached a stage that it can exist only as Fascism. The only way in which Imperialism can exist in the world of today is as World Fascism and no other. The war of the Fascist Powers is the battle for the fascist enslavement of the world. That will be the fate of the entire world, if Fascism succeeds. But this cannot and will not happen. This is what the mighty Soviet has ensured, this is what the peoples' war means. World Imperialism has been split—fascist Imperialism has been isolated as the breakable pincer grip of the Soviet alliance from the one end and the rising peoples' upsurge from another, and has to face its own liquidation inside the peoples' camp. Peoples' victory in the peoples' war means the end of world imperialism and nothing loss.
- Get rid of the idea that it is Soviet's war and therefore, our power and that we support the war because we don't want Soviet crushed. Get it clear that the Soviet is unconquerable. It is the Soviet which transformed the imperialist war into people's war. It is the Soviet which stands guarantee against the realization of imperialist aims in this war and for the realization of the peoples' aims. It is the Soviet which has opened the prospect of peoples' unity on a worldwide scale, it is Soviet which has given the peoples of the world a war to win and through it their own, liberation. The Soviet does it because it is powerful enough to do it with the complete victory of Socialism within its own borders. The Soviet does it because it is a truly people' state after the Stalinist Constitution. The Soviet does it because it has a workers' and peasants' Red Army. The Soviet does it because the Soviet peoples are a NEW people, because the Soviet state is a NEW state, the like of which the world has never known before. It is being acknowledged like the magic of the legends by the imperialists, it is the living truth for the peoples of the world. One-sixth of the Socialist World, under our leading Party, led by our leader Stalin, has not only transformed the world situation, but is acting the leader of the peoples of the world, and what we are witnessing today is the emergence of the living bond that unites the peoples of the world with the Soviet. By transforming the world situation, the Soviet has laid the basis for a worldwide peoples' front, by its heroic deeds it is paving the way for world liberation, its mighty strength is directly behind every struggling people.

- Get rid of the idea that the peoples' war means that our struggle for independence is off for the time being and we have to fight the war under whatever conditions exist. Get it clear that the peoples' war, itself is our struggle against imperialism. Get it clear that our struggle against Imperialism reduces itself today to one single issue—take the peoples' war in the hands of our people. Get it clear that the actual struggle for our liberation begins with one single act of winning a National Government. Get it clear that the peoples' war is the straight and simple path for India's own liberation and there is no other course before any honest son of our people if he really stands by India's freedom and seriously means to fight for it.
- Get rid of the idea that the peoples' war is the particular property of the proletariat and that it is the job of our Party to democrat itself from all parties and our lone role to fight the peoples' war. Get it clear that it was the historic role of the Party of the proletariat to be the first to awaken to the consciousness of the change in the character of the war. Get it clear that it is the actual role of our Party to unite the entire nation to take the peoples' war in peoples' hands. Get it clear that it is the job of every Communist and every Party Unit to go all-out to unite with every patriot, all political organization that desire to resist the fascists, that want to defend the country, that seek India's freedom.
- Get rid of the idea that the peoples' war policy means the isolation of our Party. Get it clear that the peoples' war heralds a new period for India's united National Front, greater and more glorious than any we have yet witnessed, or which the main base will be the National Congress, which will result in the unity of all patriotic organisations, which will witness the unity of all communities and nationalities in one single endeavour to defend our common Motherland. Faith in our ancient nation demands this of us. If this does not happen, it is fascist enslavement for our great people. Look at the growing reality, at real life. Our nation is getting into stride for the peoples' war, our patriots beginning to utter our own slogans, a new period of our national unity is emerging right before our eyes. Recall even Sapru's speech at the recent Non-Party Leaders' Conference, he called it the peoples' war, he gave hell to the Max-wells as birds of passage, he called upon the Congress and the League not to sulk in their tents but unite, he, of course, trembled for the fate of India and Britain but he also wanted all that was necessary to take this war from the hands of imperialist autocrats into the hands of the people. Recall that Nehru who was sneering at the peoples' war slogans, building castles in the air about the inevitable collapse of imperialism, propounding theories that there was no danger to India speaks of our testing time having come, of resisting the aggressor come what may, of India playing their role in unity with China and Soviet. Above all, recall that the great Congress at Wardha declared itself against Fascism and ready to fight the war whenever honourable conditions were created for it. True, the Congress did not adopt a positive policy, true that the Congress did not go all-out to take the war in the hands of the nation, true the Congress did not mobilize and assert India's national unity, of which it itself is the living embodiment, against imperialist autocracy and lead our people into the peoples' war. When has the bourgeois leadership of a colonial movement, not waited as long as it could before it would call upon its own people to act? Initiative to rouse the people, to unite the nation has to come from the camp of the proletariat. Remember, comrades, that China lost its five provinces before the Chinese United national Front got into full stride,

before the Kuomintang leadership gave up all hopes of peace with the Jap-Fascists. Remember that it was our Party that FIRST gave the call for all-in resistance to Jap Fascists, that went into BATTLE FIRST. In our country to-day, the situation is changing with lightning speed, events themselves bear out our analysis, what we said yesterday our fellow-patriots are saying today, all patriotic organizations are finding their way sooner than most of us even dreamt of before, that our liberation lies through this war, that the only way is our unity, in short, to the policy of the peoples' war itself.

It is the job of the Communists to hear their voice and speak to them in their own tongue. It is the job of the Communists to show to them on the basis of their own experience that the path for all is only one-UNITY, that our very patriotism demands fighting the fascists to death, that our hatred of British Imperialism must express itself in taking the war in our own hands, that all that we have to do is to unite and fight, and we will win. It is our job to appeal to patriotism and patriotism alone, it is our job to do all we can to forge national unity, it is our job to propagate the peoples' war as India's war of freedom, it is our job to make our national fighters realize what role the Soviet and China are playing in the peoples' war and what glorious destiny awaits India in unity with them. It is our job to fight helplessness and defeatism and make flaming appeals to patriotism and popularize the glorious prospect opened out by the peoples' war for our great people. This and nothing else is our job, as Communists, as members of the Party of the proletariat, as the true sons and daughters of our ancient nation. No sectarian self-superiority but self-confident camaraderie with our fellow-fighters, not phrase mongering but plain and simple language, no endless arguments but untiring practical work is the way to popularize the peoples' war policy.

In these documents, comrades, we have tried to tell you how to do this. Our Central Provincial and District leaders are not with us but are hostages in the hands of the imperialists. We can no more delegate effective propagandists to you to explain the tasks of the new period that is upon us. Most of you are very young and inexperienced. Remember, the success of the Party policy, the honour of the Party banner depends upon how well you understand the peoples' war policy how eloquently you popularize it, what respect you command from the proud patriots of our national movement.

- Read these documents as your text-books.
- Fix upon the best propagandist in your unit to report on these to you and get all your questions answered by him.
- Immediately branch yourself out to hold group meetings with militants or Party sympathizers and win them over.
- Go all-out to sell the publications that are meant for sale. It will be a first rate political job done if you can sell to every Congress of student worker the new literature that is being issued.
- Get a Bolshevik understanding of the new line, clear and complete, try to speak with Stalinist simplicity to non-Party nationalists and you will sweep away all difficulties and get on to practical work.

Some comrades and units are wasting themselves away in long-term speculations, discussing when will this happen and when that, some are becoming military experts on the basis of the daily newspapers and a few maps and forecasting developments! This must go. Appeal to patriotism, pure and unalloyed. Show how there is no other way for our nation except the

peoples' war policy. Don't enter into fine arguments about conditional or unconditional support, poses the simple issue, either we take the peoples' war in peoples' hands or face death and destruction under Fascism. Show how if we can take the war in our own hands, we march straight to our liberation. Unity is the crying need of the nation. Set an example yourself by doing all that you can by forging peoples' unity, unity of all popular organisations in your own locality. You have the historic deeds of our Chinese comrades to emulate. You have the heroic deeds of our Soviet brothers before your eyes. Let these be your hourly inspiration.

Agitational Tasks

All around you see our patriots feeling utterly helpless, our people in a state of panic. This is the inevitable result of stalemate. The izzat of the Sarkar is gone, the national movement is without a direction. The past is dying the future is not visible, the uncertainty of the present is leading to rumour-mongering and panic is spreading like wildfire. This is the immediate situation but it cannot last. It is our first and foremost task to fight panic. How? Not by sermonizing to the people not to be cowards, as the Mahatma is doing. Not by tearing our hair at the 'wait and watch' policy of the national leadership and entering into long-winded arguments with our fellow-patriots about the soundness of the peoples' war policy in abstract terms.

THE WAY TO FIGHT PANIC IS TO POPULARISE THE PEOPLES' WAR POLICY, not in the abstract but over specific issues. In every meeting, in every demonstration, UNITY, UNITY, UNITY must be the one ringing call that must come from our throats, that will instill self-confidence and allays panic and make all honest fighters listen to us.

All must unite to protect the people! Work for joint demonstrations by the Congress and League, supported by students, workers and kisans in which representatives from all organizations declare their united resolve to stand together by the people in this grave emergency, and co-operate together in every measures that will protect the people irrespective of any political differences.

All must unite to defend the country! Explain why the imperialists cannot and will not defend us, that the people alone can and will defend our country. Explain how India's patriots can not only defend our motherland but win India for Indians.

In the forefront of our agitation must be the demand for National Government. Explain how it can enable us to defend the country successfully, how it will lead to our liberation, how it will be the expression of our national unity, how it ensures that the nation's war will be in the hands of the nation and secures our future.

Every speech that we make must be a flaming appeal to patriotism, must preach national unity, must show the immediate need to fight for National Government, must show how we can become masters of our fate and cease being imperial slaves by taking this war in our hands.

Our immediate agitational efforts must be concentrated on two issues: creating anti-Japanese feeling and winning support for the release of Detenus and political prisoners. This is the way to forge national unity, this is the way to rally the people.

Anti-Japanese Day

In every locality, Communists must take initiatives to celebrate anti-Japanese Day in co-operation with as many organizations as possible, and make it a great United Front day. Do all you can to get the auspices of the congress and League and get their leaders to speak.

- Explain how Japanese invasion will not be the overthrow of British imperialist rule and India's freedom but lead to the fascist enslavement of our country.
- Explain why imperialism cannot and will not defend the country. All must unite to defend the country. All must unite to fight for National Government. Under a National Government, we can and will hurl back the fascist invader.
- Expose the foul deeds of Jap Fascists. Expose their slogan of 'Asia for Asiatics'. Denounce those who look up to Fascism for India's freedom as traitors to the country.
- Glorify China. Explain what the Chinese have done the Indians too can do. Explain how shoulder to shoulder with the Chinese people, we can win not only our liberation but act as the liberators of ancient Asia.
- Explain how it is the war for our homes and hearths, for the honour of our mothers and sisters, for everything we cherish and hold dear. Explain how the nation needs assertion of all its strength to take the war in its own hands. Explain how under the leadership of the united nation, this war will call forth the first qualities of our great people and enable us to carve our own future.

Release the Patriots for Freedom's War!

Take immediate initiative to hold similar united front demonstrations for the release of detenus and political prisoners. Congressmen may object to call it the freedom's war, yet drop the world and have only Release the Patriots.

- Demand their UNCONDITIONAL release
- They are among the best of India's patriots
- They are seasoned anti-fascist fighters
- The people need them today more than ever before
- They are hostages in imperialist hands
- With a united voice demand their immediate release and get them back in peoples' ranks for freedom's battle.

Comrade! Remember that we can win the release of our comrades not by appealing to the present autocratic government which has tortured them, which seeks to humiliate them by imposing anti-national conditions before it will release them, but by carrying on the most widespread and intense agitation for their immediate and unconditional release.

Immediately bend all your energies to build a united front campaign on the basis of Anti-Japanese and Release the Patriots campaigns. The moment the British Government's policy is announced, new agitational tasks will face us. The Working Committee will meet and shortly after a meeting of the A.I.C.C. will be called. The party lead on these issues will reach you through the organ and the Party Letters.

Slogans of Action

The place of the Communists is always by the side of the people. Unprecedented and new opportunities to serve the people are upon us. The threatening danger of invasion throws upon us the immediate task of organizing the civil defence of the people.

All comrades must clearly grasp certain fundamental issues to be able to function effectively in the new situation:

- 'It is not enough to fight panic politically, only through speeches. It is not enough to popularize peoples' war slogans in meetings and demonstrations. Every Communist

must set the example in personal courage and be foremost in fighting defeatist propaganda in the area he lives. He must be the first in supporting everything that helps to protect the people. It is no time to wait for instructions' hear the voice of the people and know all the patriotic and selfless workers of your area. Together with them do all that you can to serve the people.

- Mere willingness to serve the people is not enough. The existing training we have is not enough to enable us to serve the people in the war situation. What then we must learn a new? What must we immediately do?

All into A.R.P.

- All party members, together with our sympathizers must enroll themselves into official A.R.P. to get elementary A.R.P. training.
- Only those must be exempted who are whole-time party functionaries or functionaries in mass organizations and have no time at all to spare. The second category of exemption will be those against who the Congress may take disciplinary action if they joined the OFFICIAL A.R.P.

The point to realise is that unless most of us have A.R.P. training, we will be able to do nothing in case of air raids except be helpless watchers of the butchery of our people.

A.R.P. training is the most essential task in all coastal towns, especially of the South and East.

An additional responsibility falls upon us because the Congress organisation in these areas is very weak and has hardly done anything about P.V.B. and the A.R.P. is completely official-ridden.

- Get A.R.P. training quick—is our slogan for all Party Members. If in some areas they will not let you go into A.R.P. if you are P.V.B. and the A.R.P. training first and then go into the P.V.B.

All into P.V.B.

- All Party Members and sympathizers except those who are whole-timers on other fronts must join the Peoples' Volunteer Brigades (P.V.B.) and on no account the Civic Guards (we may send some unknown contacts into it to get information about its functioning. etc.)
- Wherever mass organisations, like T.U.'s, Kisan Sabhas, Student Federations have volunteer organizations, they must be affiliated to the P.V.B. and work in perfect co-operation with it.
- The point is not to start mushroom volunteer organizations nor endlessly discuss what form of volunteer organization can best protect the people, but pool all the resources of all popular organizations together and around the P.V.B. and unite them all. This is what the interests of the people demand and our policy of national unity.

Inside the P.V.B. it must be our endeavour to be called its best volunteers and whichever P.V.B. units are in charge of Party members must be run as model units.

In those areas and districts where P.V.B. units have not been started, we must take immediate initiative to rally the Congress workers and form P.V.B. under competent organizers.

In several places not only the Rightist but also Leftist elements will try to keep out our comrades and are likely to play a provocative role. All Party Members must be on guard not

to play the game of the provocateurs. We do not go into the P.V.B. to debate over our political policies but to work together with all patriotic elements to organize the protection of our people.

With the formation of the National Government, the whole character of the PVB is almost certain to change. It is likely to merge itself with the Civic Guards and be transformed into some sort of Citizens' Militia. For the time being, we should not be drawn into discussion over its future role but do all we can to improve its present functioning by making concrete and constructive suggestions and by giving the best Party guidance to the comrades who are sent into the P.V.B.

Every P. Unit should see to it that a competent comrade is put in charge of P.V.B. fraction and the volunteers' work in the locality concerned. Young comrade will either be too helpless or commit serious mistakes if they are not properly and promptly guided.

Org. and Tech.

Special instructions are being sent to the provinces immediately threatened with foreign invasion. The comrades in those areas will get concrete guidance from their P.C.'s.

In the meanwhile, following instructions apply to all P. Units:

- Don't dismantle the U.G. apparatus before legally has been won. The U.G. Centres of the Southern and Eastern provinces need being strengthened rather than weakened;
- Check up and strengthen the contact system all round. The higher units must be able to reach the lower units at a moment's notice. Ensure this immediately. Fix up a time-limit within which a new and better contact system gets in functioning order;
- Don't disturb the differentiation between exposed and unexposed members. There is more need than ever before to keep the unexposed members apart from the exposed and not let them get mixed up. Most of the unexposed members can, however, join the A.R.P. and / or P.V.B.
- In the Southern and Eastern provinces all Party Units and members must be guided by the realization that in the areas that come under Jap-occupation, all known Communists will be summarily butchered. Cadre is the only capital of the Party. We must save all the Party members we can. What specific instructions apply in such cases.
- All Party Units must destroy all unnecessary records and documents, especially names and addresses of members and P. minutes. New and safer dumps must be organized.
- All Party members must stick to their posts up to the very last. Our primary job is not to save ourselves but protect our people and fight the Fascists as long as we can. No. P. member leaves his place on his own, without the permission of his Unit Secretary.
- If and when no resistance to the Fascist invaders is possible it is the particular responsibility of all KNOW Party Members not to fall into the hands of the fascist brutes. All party members must make bandobust NOW for a safe shelter, in consultation with their Unit Secretary. The best course for them is to change the area of their residence, change their name and adopt an entirely new identity. They can easily do this by arranging it now with their friends and relatives, and migrating to the neighboring districts where they are not well known or less known. Their Unit Secretary in consultation with the Secy. of the next higher unit must pass on a report on such comrades to the Unit Secy. of the place where such comrades will have to earn their own living. The P. would be unable to help them financially even temporarily or take them over all whole timers. They will have to take on some job or the other for their living and be available for part-time work in the service of the Party.

- Every P. unit in these threatened areas must delegate its most reliable and resourceful comrade to make technical bandobust NOW so that P. contact may be kept under conditions of total illegality and complete breakdown of all communications, with its higher and lower units.

All the above tasks must be finished WITHIN TWO WEEKS, the bandobust rehearsed, and passed by a competent comrade. To postpone the carrying out of these elementary precautions is to be a non-revolutionary, a Satyagrahi instead of a Bolshevik.

New Directions

We will understand the character of the new period more clearly only when the announcement of the British Cabinet is out and the Congress attitude to it is known. On these factors will depend what immediate political developments take place, when and at what rate we get legality, what emerge as our new tasks.

With the formation of the National Government, the entire nature of our work will change, we will call upon a large part of Party Members to attend special Party Schools and go into the army, we will be able to conduct all our activities legally and get back our leaders, entirely new slogans of mass mobilization will have to be carried out, our party will have to work along lines our Chinese comrades have been working.

If the formation of the National Government is delayed and the Jap invasion precedes it, which does not seem likely to-day, it will be the most confusing picture and very widespread panic will ensue during which our Party will have to act with the Congress and all patriotic organizations to serve the people its best.

The immediate tasks for all Party Members and Units have been outlines in this Letter. Be at them for all you are worth; they will earn our Party the respect of all patriots, they will pave the way for the entry of our great nation into the occasion.

With Party greetings,

for the Polit-Bureau.

23. 'Situation Has Changed': N.M. Joshi's 'Demand for Release of Detenus at the Civil Liberties Conference'

The National Herald, 9 March 1942.

Lahore, March 8

A fervent appeal to the Government of India and the provincial Governments to release all political prisoners and detenus in view of the changed international situation was made by Mr. N.M. Joshi M.L.A. (Central) presiding over the Punjab Civil Liberties Conference held in Lahore this afternoon.

.... With the entry of Soviet Russia into the war the situation had changed. Most of the detenus belonged to the Communist Party. He, therefore, appealed to the Government of India and the provincial Governments to release them and give them an opportunity to reconsider their attitude with regard to the war and then enunciate their views thereon....

Proceeding, Mr. Joshi said that the situation had recently changed on account of the invasion of Burma by Japan. It was an opportune time for the Government to liquidate its old policy and release the political prisoners. A large number of them, he was sure, would lend their support in the prosecution of the war. Mr. Joshi added that it was their duty to fight the

aggressor but unfortunately, at present, Indians were not equipped with arms. He, however, hoped that the Government would provide them with arms so that they might be able to put up a successful resistance.

24. Extract from the Reports on the Internal Political Situation for the Second Half of March 1942 Received from Bengal Province (through Home Department) about Activities of the Students Federation

GOI Home Political File No. 226/42, NAI.

An instance of this use of political catch-phrases is afforded by recent occurrences in Khulna where the Students' Federation, under cover of support to the 'Friends of the Soviet Union' and the loud profession of sympathies against Fascism, have, first: set themselves up against constituted authority, secondly: in meetings (which they were forbidden to hold) delivered speeches which the local officers have considered prejudicial and have made the basis of prosecution and, thirdly: have endeavoured to create prejudice against Government on the ground that it is not genuine in its conduct of the war because it has placed obstacles, as is alleged, in the way of effectively rallying public opinion against Fascist aggression.

25. Organizational Tours by Office-bearers of the AITUC; Report of the General Secretary from February 1942 to 15 April at the 20th Session of AITUC, Nagpur
File No. CPI 1943/15, ACH.

Com. V.V. Giri, President, made a tour in Bengal and some parts of Bihar, meeting chiefly the Railway unions, in the months of March and April, immediately after the Cawnpore session. He addressed a meeting of miners at Jharia also. After going to Madras, he was engaged with the Bus-Workers' Strike there. He also visited some of the affiliated unions in Madras. He addressed a meeting of workers at Delhi in the month of June, and during his stay in Bombay, he acquainted himself with the conditions of affiliated unions in the city.

Punjab—The General Secretary paid a visit to Lahore in March 1942, during the course of which he met Trade Union workers there, and discussed with them the plan of organization of workers there, and discussed with them the plan of organization of the AITUC in the Punjab. Later on, Com. Shanta Bhalerao, the Assistant Secretary, made a fortnight's tour in the Punjab in the month of April, visiting Lahore, Okara and Amritsar....

Delhi Unions—The General Secretary, and both the Assistant Secretaries have been keeping regular contact with Trade Union workers in Delhi during their visits there.

C.P.—Com. R.A. Khedgikar visited Burhanpur in the month of June and had a meeting of workers there. He visited Nagpur next where he met different workers in affiliated unions, and advised them as to the proper organization of the C.P.T.U.C. The General Secretary, during his visit to Nagpur in September for the meeting of the General Council, had talks with representatives of different groups regarding the functioning of the C.P.T.U.C.

Bombay—Com. Shanta Bhalerao paid visits to the affiliated unions at Poona, Dhulia and Broach.

Madras—Com. R.A. Khedgikar made a special tour in the province of Madras for organizing the work of the AITUC in the month of November. He visited affiliated unions in the city of Madras and also reorganized the Madras Provincial Trade Union Congress Committee, which had ceased to function. Later on, he visited Cannanore, Calicut, Trichur, Ambalur, Allepy, Coimbatore and Salem.

Sindh—Com. Shanta Bhalerao paid a visit to Karachi and studied the working of the affiliated Unions there. She also paid a visit to Trade Unions in Hyderabad and Sindh.

U.P.—Com. Shanta Bhalerao made a tour in U.P. visiting Cawnpore, Lucknow, Allahabad, Mirzapur, Benares, Mogalsarai, Ferozabad and Jhansi. A meeting of the Provincial Committee was also convened when she was present, in which future lines of work for the Provincial Committee were laid down.

26. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of April 1942 about Speeches Condemning Fascist Aggression GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The Bombay Girni Kamgar union (Red Flag) observed a 'War Week' from April 1st by holding public meetings in Bombay City at the rate of one a day, at which speeches were made and resolutions passed condemning Fascist aggression, appealing to the public to support the war effort and demanding supply of arms to Indians. The attendance at these meetings varied from 25 to 1000. The Union also held several street corner meetings in the labour area at which the workers were exhorted not to be panicky and not to leave Bombay but to emulate the example of the Soviet and Chinese workers and fight the Fascist aggression.

At the meetings of Railway workers held at Manmad (Nasik district) and Dhond (Poona) speeches were made appealing to all Railway workers to assist in the war measures and oppose Fascism.

Similarly, speakers at labour meetings held at Jalgaon and Amalner (East Khandesh district) asked the workers to join the 'Lal Bavta Sainik Dal' which they said was formed by the Girni Kamdar Union for the destruction of capitalism and consisted of revolutionary-minded people who wanted to attack Japan with an armed force 10,000 strong.

27. Extract from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the First Half of April 1942 regarding Meetings and Rallies against Fascism GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

An 'anti-fascist' rally was held at Akola and was organized by a body called the 'C.P. and Berar Anti-Fascist Committee' composed of communist groups from the Students Federation, Kisan Sabhas, and Trade Unions. Previous to this, a series of meetings—sparsely attended—were addressed in Nagpur by G.M. Huddar and his associates. P.Y. Deshpande of Nagpur addressing the audience at the Akola rally emphasized the need of resisting Fascism. After describing Japanese atrocities, he advised the people not to be led away by anti-British sentiments. Similar rallies in May are being organized in Nagpur and Amraoti and the movement seems to be gaining ground. Activity of the communist groups in Jubbulpore is also reported.

28. Note Prepared by S. Rangnekar and John R. Dain, 13 April 1942, on the Sixteen Communists

GOI Home Political File No. 44/32/42, NAI.

The Sixteen Communists

The terms of reference to us in connection with the security prisoners detained by the Central Government require us to advise whether 'having regard to the scope and intentions of Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules, the material on which the order of detention was based in each case was sufficient to constitute a prima facie case for the use by the executive authority for the powers conferred on it by that rule' and, in the event of a finding that adequate grounds existed for the original order, 'whether having regard to any representation by the person detained, his continued detention appears to be justified and whether any ground was disclosed for the reconsideration of the order in the light of present circumstances'. This contemplates a separate review of the case of each person, but for reasons which will appear in the course of this note we have found it impracticable to deal with these sixteen persons otherwise than as a group....

4. The Communist Party of India subscribe to all the recognized tenets of Communism. Their ultimate aim is to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat through mass revolution. Their policy in the preparatory stage is to foment any kind of discontent, be it agrarian agitation or industrial unrest, not for the redress of grievances but as a valuable training ground for inculcating revolutionary methods and mentality and in the hope that in the end these partial movements may be combined in a united front for the final mass revolution.... [T]he party in India seems small in numbers but its leaders at least are able and determined men. It consists of a strong central nucleus, highly organized both openly and secretly, with extensive ramifications which are broken from time to time but promptly repaired. Communism in this country lacks mass appeal and hence it has to work through other organizations. This somewhat limits its capacity for mischief, for its attempts to capture or activate Congress or a party in Congress have so far achieved little. But the evidence before us leaves no room for doubt that at the time when these detention orders issued, the authorities were dealing with a small but effectively organized and disciplined party, implacably hostile to Government, who were endeavouring by insidious and conspiratorial methods to impede the country's war effort and that from time to time these attempts were meeting with some measure of success. We are also satisfied that each of these sixteen persons was an active and prominent member of the party. We therefore consider that the action taken in detaining these people was fully justified and that the propriety of the original orders cannot be called in question....

6.... We believe that the Communist Party of India have resiled from an untenable position and come into line with the Communist Party of Great Britain and other Communists of the world in recognizing that the condition precedent of any form of freedom is the defeat of the Axis powers. We are unable to believe that this new policy is a mere subterfuge to ensure release from jail which will be abandoned when it has achieved its purpose. The sixteen persons have been detained because they are members of a party which was actually engaged in obstructing the country's war effort. For that the party has changed its attitude to the war, the general ground for detention is undermined, and further detention of any one of these persons would have to be justified on grounds peculiar to him.

7. It has already been noted that practically all the evidence before us is concerned with the activities of the party, as members of which these sixteen persons have been detained. We have

little upon which to distinguish between them as individuals. There is a short history sheet of each. Some are more prominent or of longer standing than others. Some have been judicially convicted in connection with Communist activities, others have come to notice as members of the editorial board of the 'National Front' or as authors of signed articles or pamphlets. But the Communists work as a party, the most dangerous part of their work is secret and the greater part of their written output anonymous. We can find little to guide us in the matter that directly concerns us, the attitude of each to the war. Each prisoner has sent us a written statement. Even these statements show the influence of party, for they are in a type form for each jail in which these prisoners are confined. Messrs Batliwala, Mirajkar, Patkar, Dange and Ranadive were in the Yeravda Jail. Their statement recognizes the changed character of the war for the Communist, though it consists mainly of a pugnacious reproof of the British Government for delaying the present alignment of the forces of freedom by short-sighted blundering. Messrs Malaviya, Sinha, Bharadwaj, Mozumdar, A.K. Ghosh and Sher Jung were in Deoli Camp when they received the first notice. They at first refused to plead on account of an objection to the procedure. In response to a second invitation they have sent a type-form of statement from Izatnagar Jail. This recognizes the changed character of the war for the Communist though it is largely occupied in stressing the ineptitude of the Government of India and demands release as a right. In the case of this group we have also taken into consideration letter addressed to them by Sir Stafford Cripps. This letter is signed by A.K. Ghosh, R.D. Bharadwaj, H. Malaviya 'and other Communist Security Prisoners detained in Bareilly Central Prison' (Izatnagar). This pledges unflinching support to the war against Fascism in unmeasured terms. In this group Sher Jung stands by himself. He added a paragraph to his first refusal to plead saying that he had no intention of obstructing the war effort. His second statement conforms to the type of the group, but we have received also extracts from letters written to his wife which show his intention to support the war effort. This prisoner's case we have regarded as very doubtful. His history shows him to be of the quasi-criminal class and he is connected with the Kirti Party in Meerut, which is independent of the Communist party of India. His name is also found in the papers submitted to us in connection with the military cases though there is no evidence directly implicating him in those affairs. He is detained, however, as a member of the Communist Party of India and on this reference we can find no clear ground for distinguishing his case from others. Messrs S.V. Ghate and A.S.K. Ayyangar are in Vellore Jail. These two first sent a joint reply refusing to make any statement: later they sent separate but similar statements which follow almost verbally the statements sent from the Yeravda Jail. Messrs Mukerji and Rahul Sankirtana are in Hazaribagh Jail. They promise active and unreserved support to the war effort and they have perhaps realized that their previous estimate of it was wrong. The statement of Mr. Sajjad Zaheer, who was confined in Lucknow Jail is individual, frank and convincing; it is understood that he has already been released. Common to all these statements is the recognition that in present conditions Communists must support the war effort, though some of the prisoners put it less ungenerously than others. It would, therefore, seem that each accepts for himself the changed policy of the party. We have had the advantage of discussing these cases with an officer deputed by Home Department whose intimate and specialized knowledge of Communism has been very helpful to us. He put before us another aspect of the matter. He suggested that the Communists in India as a party are of little account politically; that it is imperative to distinguish between the party and individual communists; that such of these persons as are true communists are sincere in their wish to help in the defeat of the Fascist powers but that others have no real reverence for Russia and have merely turned to the

new policy as a means of securing their own release from jail while the hatred of the British connection continues to be their ruling passion and on release they will merely renew their subversive anti-war agitation under another designation....

8. Our conclusion, therefore, is that these persons have been detained as members of the Communist party of India, because that party was actively opposing the war effort; that the party has ceased to oppose the war effort and now supports it; that the reasons alleged for the detention of these persons no longer exist and they may safely be released; and we can find no material before us on which to suggest exceptions to individual cases.

29. Note from R. Tottenham, 15 April 1942, on Release of Communists
GOI Home Political File No. 44/32/42, NAI.

The case for the release of these 15 persons as put by the Review Committee is a strong one, but before it can be accepted there are three important questions to be decided:

- 1) If they are released is there any justification for maintaining the ban on the C.P.I. as an unlawful association? Indeed may there not be a positive change in doing so, in as much as it might give those individuals among the 15 an excuse for going underground and resuming their subversive activities in, perhaps, some other form. In other words, if releases are to take place, must it not be on the bases that those released will take ... part openly in public life and demonstrate the sincerity of their professed change of heart (or tactics) by actively supporting the war effort and inducing others to do the same?
- 2) Can we release these important members of the C.P.I. without previous consultations with Prov. Govts—on the ground that such actions would inevitably prejudice the decisions of Prov. Govts and Provincial Reviewing agencies in respect of less important Communists? This point illustrates the force of our original contention that an All India Reviewing Agency was really required, but from the practical point of view I would say that we must at least inform Prov. Govts of the line we propose to take, leaving it to them (if we are to release) to detenus in custody only those individuals whose activities they have reason to believe would be dangerous apart from the fact that they are members of the Communist party of India.
- 3) Will D.I.B. please comment as quickly as possible, as H.M. is anxious to reach a decision without delay both as to policy and procedure.

30. Note from Pilditch, DIB, 27 April 1942, about Dealing with
Interned Communists as a Group or Otherwise
GOI Home Political File No. 44/32/42, NAI.

It is difficult to accept the Committee's view that it is impractical to deal with the cases of the interned communists otherwise than as a group. In the Home Department letter stress was laid on the desirability of examining each case on its individual merits. The reasons for this if I remember rightly derived from consideration of the effect that each case contained peculiarities bound up with the political outlook and previous history of each of the internees. The replies as summarized in the Committee's memorandum shows that, although batches confined in separate jails have adopted a common formula in each case, there is sufficient difference in

substance in each of the group replies to suggest that the need for individual consideration is justifiable. The possibility of individual treatment is indeed recognized by the Committee in the case of Sher Jung, but in spite of the fact that his communism is very strongly tinged with revolutionary terrorism, the Committee propose to treat him on terms of equality with others whose records do not display the same dangerous characteristics.

2. This leads us to the question of tactics ... A note prepared in this Bureau as recently as March 21st on the basis of communist documents and circulars showed very clearly the 'people's war' slogan in effect to be nothing more than a cloak under cover of which anti-Government activities and propaganda were to be carried on in furtherance of the unchanged objectives of the Communist Party, namely, the substitution of a people's government for the Government established by law by any means that might suggest themselves, including even armed rebellion. It was equally clear that, while there was to be support for a people's war, support for the British war effort was a very secondary and by no means universally accepted consideration. What the Committee has failed to realize is the existence of something more than a possibility that many communist leaders would, if released, pursue a dual policy of professed resistance to the Axis powers and practical opposition to British 'Imperialism' in India—a position which would almost certainly lead to hindrance rather than help ...

3.... Communist influence among the martial classes and even in labour circles is very restricted; there is no reason for believing that their being at liberty would either assist recruitment or increase war production by steadying labour. I agree with the following opinion expressed in a note in this Bureau:

'In the general political field it will be futile to expect that by placating the Communist Party we shall be building up a nucleus of progressive opposition to Congress and other anti-war elements. Communists cannot afford a break with the Congress; in pursuance of their time-honoured and fixed policy they must work through and with Congress and its allied organizations or perish. Apart from unrestrained and pugnacious criticism of the British and Indian Governments generally and of their war effort in particular—we may expect this as a certainty—the principal task to which the communist leaders will address themselves on release will be to consolidate the party organization and extend it in all possible directions through infiltration into Congress, labour, the Kisan movement, the armed forces and similar bodies ... (for) the subversion of the established system (of Government) the moment a suitable opportunity arises, whether during the war or after its termination.'

....

4. Additional Secretary has raised the question whether, if all communists are released, there can be any justification for maintaining the ban on the C.P.I. as an unlawful association. I do not think that there would be any justification. On the other hand, in view of what I have suggested above, I can see every reason for supposing that the withdrawal of the ban we may soon be faced with a situation which would be all the harder to deal with by reason of our having discarded the very weapon which has enabled us in the past to maintain a fairly satisfactory control over the communist menace. I do not believe that the threat from communism is any whit diminished as the result of Russia's entry into the war. It may be argued that if trouble were to arise, the trouble-makers could be dealt with under the ordinary law or under the Defence of India Rules. This would in effect amount to a cat and mouse procedure which, as we have seen from recent reports of debates in the British Parliament on the question of the removal of the ban on the 'Daily Worker', is regarded with strong disapproval in England. The possibility of agitators disappearing 'underground' cannot be excluded.

5. Provincial Governments would certainly have to be consulted before the communists under detention by the Central Government were released and I imagine that, in some cases at any rate, there would be very strong objection, more especially from Bengal and the Punjab, the former in regard to persons with a terrorist past and the latter on account of the Kirti communists, for reasons connected with the Sikh situation in the Punjab and the known Axis connections of the Kirti groups. Furthermore, in case it was proposed to cancel the ban on the C.P.I., the Secretary of State would have to be consulted.

6. Before Government decided what line it should take there are two points I would like to suggest: the first is that we should ascertain without delay from the fifteen detenus how they propose in practice to implement their professed policy towards the war, and secondly that there should be further consideration whether our original scheme for the individual examination of cases cannot still be carried out. If more detailed material against each detenu is desired, we would do our best to provide it whatever additional heavy burden this might entail. Alternatively, and what I feel Government could accept with confidence (although the procedure would in effect be a denial of the effectualness of the Dain Committee), we can provide a simple list of those detenus whose release we believe can safely be recommended; and it should be understood that our recommendations would err possibly on the generous side. At any rate I feel strongly that the examining committee has failed to fulfil its task in the manner that we hoped for and that the recommendations it has forwarded contain so many elements of positive danger as to render them unacceptable.

31. Note from R.M. Maxwell, 2 May 1942, about Policy to Be Adopted for Release of Communists

GOI Home Political File No. 44/32/42, NAI.

... [C]onsiderable caution is necessary and I would at present favour the plan suggested by Mr. Pilditch that we should proceed gradually and, in the first instance, release only those about whose attitude we can feel a reasonable degree of confidence. D.I.B. is, I believe, taking steps in the meanwhile to get into touch with Mr. P.C. Joshi and if this attempt is successful it may lead to further conclusions. If indeed we could come across someone having an inside knowledge of the party who could be relied on to vouch for only those who are genuinely anxious and to support the War Front, this might afford the basis of discriminating between individuals. The procedure in fact would then resemble that followed in the case of the All-India Students Federation. It is, however, more difficult to get into touch with the central organization of the C.P.I. or to know what is really in their minds and I do not want them, if they obtain liberty, to set to work against bodies such as the Indian Federation of Labour which are attempting through the various labour unions affiliated to them to exercise a wholesome influence on the attitude of Labour towards the war.

I mentioned this case to H.E. yesterday and understood him to be in general agreement with these views.



32. Extract from the Punjab Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of April 1942, Received from the Central Intelligence Officer, Lahore, about Release of 'Top Notch' Communist Leaders

GOI Home Political File No. 226/1942, NAI.

Communist and Kirti circles are deeply impressed by the courage shown by the Punjab Government in releasing their 'top notch' leaders on May Day. Those released are Teja Singh Sutantar, Achhar Singh Chhina, Iqbal Singh Hundal, Bhagat Singh Bilga, Sohan Singh Josh, Feroz-ud-din Mansur, Karam Singh Man and Fazal Elahi Qurban. The first act of the C.P.I. group has been to issue a proclamation: 'We must defend our country against Japanese Imperialism. For us there is no retreat, no surrender. We must and will oppose Japanese Imperialism to the bitter end.' They go on to urge the formation of a National Government, the release of political prisoners, the creation of a democratic people's army by mobilization of the Nation's manpower and the utilization of all the industries and resources of the country. It appears that Communist and Kirti circles are genuinely keen on proving their mettle, but there is some danger that over-emphasis on popular demands (most of which are extravagant and absurd) will negative the effect of pro-war propaganda. Now that the leaders are out of jail, there is some chance of the rank and file being properly guided so as not to undermine the authority of the Government established by law. This, however, remains to be seen.

Sd/-

D. Pilditch (?)
7.5.1942

33. N.M. Joshi Supports 'C.R.'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 25 April 1942.

Bombay, April 25

Mr. N.M. Joshi, M.L.A., (Central) in an interview regarding the resolution adopted by the Congress Legislature Party in Madras says: 'So far as the demand for Pakistan is concerned my view is that Mr. Rajagopalachari is right in advising the Congress to concede the claim of the Muslim League. Under the present circumstances we cannot get a National Government without getting the cooperation of the Muslim League and if the people of India are to take part in the defence of the country against the Japanese aggression this cannot effectively be done without the establishment of a National Government. I, therefore, feel that the proposal of the Madras Congress Legislature Party are to be accepted.'

Mr. Joshi added: 'If the Muslim League's claim is accepted there should be no difficulty in forming a National Government in Madras but I am not sure whether the Congress can accept one policy for one province and follow different policies in other provinces without weakening the Congress as a national organization.'



34. An Appeal from the Communist Members of the AICC to 'Brothers, Fellow Members of the AICC', 25 April 1942

Rajagopalachari Papers, Roll No. 2, Microfilm, NMML.

The enslaving hordes of the Japanese Fascists are ready for a brutal assault against our motherland. They have overrun South Burma. The fair fields and the cultural monuments of our neighbouring people have been laid waste. Murder, loot, rape and humiliation stalk across the violated lands of Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines. They have already struck against our coastal towns and taken a total of lives [sic]

Radio Lies

What are that [sic] bringing us? Freedom in the so called 'Co-prosperity' sphere of Japanese Imperialism? The hypocritical lies of the Tokyo Radio, even when uttered by the familiar and once patriotic voice can cheat no one. They come with their sword clippings with the blood of our brother peoples they come with their hands black with the worst crimes against mankind culture and decency. They bring us murder, loot, rape and dishonour....

NEXT IN IMPORTANCE TO THE SOVIET UNION AND TO NATIONALIST CHINA, INDIA HAS TO PLAY THE GREAT ROLE OF A BASTION OF PEOPLES RESISTANCE AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE FASCIST AGGRESSORS.

The Cripps Mission

It is against this background of larger cases that the recent Cripps negotiations must be reviewed. The Freedom-loving peoples of the world looked on with baited breath [sic] as the negotiations proceeded at New Delhi. Great was their disappointment when they fell through....

Why Negotiations Failed?

Why then did the negotiations fail? The negotiations failed because reactionaries still continue to dominate the British ruling circles. They still continue to think and act in terms of a dying past of Imperialist enslavement and not in terms of a peoples' war of liberation. The negotiations failed because the British and the American peoples, though awakened to the necessity of India's Freedom to fight side by side with them in the common war, had not built a unity and movement strong enough to force the British rulers to concede this demand.

LASTLY THE NEGOTIATIONS FAILED BECAUSE OUR OWN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT STOOD STILL ON THE SHUNTING RAILS OF NEUTRALITY AND WAS TAUGHT TO EXPECT FREEDOM AS A GIFT FROM AN IMPERIALISM IN QUANDARY.

One Single Task Before A.I.C.C.

The failure of the negotiations at a time when the menace of invasion grows hourly has created a serious situation. The enemy is perfecting his preparations and may pounce upon our land any day.... Does it mean we sit still?... There is no time to lose. There is one single task which faces the A.I.C.C. today. It is to chalk out a plan for uniting and preparing the people to fight and resist the Japanese aggressors with every available means....

National Unity for National Resistance

.... Let it be however clearly understood that the key to the mobilization of the people for an all-out resistance to the invader is National Unity and the crux of National Unity today is communal unity—Congress–League Unity. Any scheme of National resistance which the A.I.C.C. may chalk out in its present session must be based on the Joint Front of the Congress and the League as well as the organizations of workers, Kisans and the students.... National Peoples Defence Councils should be formed in every village, Taluk, Town, District, Province and on an all India plane. It should be composed of the representatives of all popular Parties united together....

Congress–League Unity Now

We, therefore, appeal to the members of the A.I.C.C. and to the leadership of the Working Committee to come forward as the unities of the people in this hour of grave peril.... It is equally urgent to arrive at an agreement to form coalition Ministries in the provinces; for the purpose of using the power to strengthen the measures for Civil Defence; for the protection of the people....

Basis of Communal Unity

In order to achieve joint front with the Muslim League and to draw Muslim masses into the joint action for organizing all-out resistance to the aggressor; the Congress should make the principle of its policy with reference to India's Unity and Pakistan clear. It is certainly necessary to preserve the political unity of India not only now ... but later as well to preserve the gains of Freedom. But the unity of India cannot be preserved by suppressing Nationalities.... The Congress should therefore recognize that the best policy for the communities and nationalities to-day in the common struggle ... is to guarantee to every Nationality with a contiguous homeland, common language, culture, historical tradition, psychological make up and common economic life, the right to exist as an autonomous State within free India which would be a free and voluntary union of equal Nationality States; and the right to secede? If it may so desire.... Such a declaration will not only lay the foundations of present utility which is the urgent need but would pave the way for the grander and more everlasting unity of the various nationalities and communities of India, than history has ever seen....

Let the leaders of the National movement call up the brave adult manhood of the country to enroll themselves in the united P.V.B. not merely for humanitarian service and Civil Defence but to train and discipline themselves to organize every kind of resistance to the invader in co-operation when the need arises; with the armed forces of the Government.... Then they will become the human material for a peoples army or for guerillas when the hour strikes.

These are the urgent tasks which face the A.I.C.C. in its present session....



35. Confidential DO No. 278/HE from Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, to Lord Linlithgow, 4 May 1942, about N.M. Joshi's Memorandum

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

My dear Linlithgow,

I enclose a letter which has come in from N. M. Joshi, together with a memorandum which he sent with his letter. The memorandum appears to be of some importance, as it advances the Communist offer of co-operation somewhat further than, so far as I am aware, has been the case hitherto. In fact, it offers full support to the war, and specifies the terms which it demands of Government in return for its support. These are clearly matters of All-India importance, and so I send the memorandum to you.

2. I felt, when the left-wing began to change its attitude towards the war, that, sooner or later, we should find ourselves somewhat embarrassed; and it was, therefore, with some relief that I saw, a few months ago, that this change of attitude had not been endorsed. It is not clear from whom this document now comes, but as it is not signed, I expect it comes from the underground leaders of the Communist party, such as Dr. Adhikari and P. C. Joshi. Its significance seems, to me, to lie in the fact that it offers whole-hearted support to the war. This is undoubtedly attractive. At a time when Congress is being as unhelpful as ever, and the threat to India is daily becoming closer, there is much to be said for rallying all who will support the war, whatever their past activities or their future intentions—and that is particularly the case with regard to any section which has an influence over Labour, which we are so anxious to keep straight on the war issue. There are, however, some very awkward issues involved in the acceptance of full support from the Communist party, and I would like to make some observations about them.

3. In the first place, their offer to give their help in recruitment to the Army and the Police seems quite unacceptable. It is only a few weeks ago that, in one of their documents, they made it clear that they would try and establish themselves in the Army and the Police so as to use them for their own purposes at a suitable moment. I notice that this document appears to realize that this part of their offer will not meet with much favour.

4. A general release of Communists may eventually be unavoidable, but if these left-wing people became the definite allies of Government, and in a far stronger position in India, than they have ever been before, there would be something like consternation amongst the employers and the capitalist classes. In this document, the Communists say that it would be their policy to avoid strikes and to settle all disputes by negotiations. They are probably quite genuine about that, but I have little doubt that, they would at once press for very large increase in wages, and would urge their claims with the argument that these are essential for the war effort. It is more than likely that, as has often happened in the past, if they work up an agitation about wages, they may not be able to control the workers, and strikes would result. Even if that were not the case, employers who have given dearness allowance and bonus—under pressure from my Government, so far as this Province is concerned—would, I have no doubt, wish the release of Communists with much misgiving, and would consider that Government, for the sake of peace in industry, was now going to press them still further on the subject of wages.

5. Apart from employers, the wealthy and middle-classes would be very much alarmed. They are terrified of Communism and of proletarian rule, and they would see, in Government recognition of and co-operation with the Communist party, the beginning of the rise of Labour.

In fact, I believe that acceptance of the demands in this document would create a class issue, the end of which, in India, would be difficult to see. It can be argued that this is bound to come, sooner or later, and that if we can obtain some important support for the war by introducing it now, it is worth doing. I feel, however, that the introduction of a class issue now may be too risky. The likely repercussions are not clear, but they may be formidable.

6. The repercussions on Congress have also to be considered. So much support for Congress comes from the Banias that there may be consternation in the Congress party at the prospect of the rise of the Communist party. This bogey might even induce the Congress to reconsider its position with regard to co-operation with Government, or it might lead them to try and rally all the well-to-do classes—merchants, land-owners, Princes—against a Government-cum-Labour alliance.

7. In short, acceptance of full Communist support may raise very large and imponderable issues. I still have an open mind on them, but I am inclined to the view that the support we would get from the Communists is probably not great enough to justify the social uneasiness which might result, and that we should, therefore, go slow about it. Gradual and experimental release of Communist prisoners and detenues, without any commitment as to the recognition of the Communist party, may be the best solution.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- Roger Lumley.

36. Letter from N.M. Joshi, MLA, to Sir Reginald Maxwell, 30 April 1942, Enclosing a Memorandum on Communist Policy
GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

Dear Sir Reginald Maxwell,

I am enclosing herewith a document which purports to restate the Communist policy and plan of work regarding the support for the war effort. It is intended to secure the freedom of those Communists who are either detained in jails or who are underground in order to avoid arrests, by removing all the fears and doubts which Government may still have regarding the Communist policy and plan of work. I vouch for the genuineness of the document as having emanated from the Communist leaders and also for being the true statement of their policy and plan of work.

I, therefore, request you to give serious consideration to this document. The main proposal made is that the persons mentioned in the last paragraph who are the leaders should have their warrants withdrawn and they should be permitted to function openly. The second proposal is that they should be permitted to publish some paper or papers without security being demanded under the Press Act. I have no doubt that the release of the Communist detenues will follow.

I would like to draw your special attention to the paragraph dealing with Production which should remove all your doubts and fears regarding the policy which the Communists would follow in industrial matters.

In conclusion I would like to express a hope that this document will receive your serious and sympathetic consideration and will enable the Communists to secure their freedom and help in the war effort which they sincerely want to do.

Yours sincerely,
N. M. Joshi

Memorandum on Communist Policy and Plan of Work

Our friends and sympathizers who have been working for the release of our imprisoned comrades have been asking us that a short document in which our policy and plan of work is outlined is needed. This memorandum is meant to serve that need.

We consider this war to be a People's War, a war of world liberation in which the Indian people in their own interest must participate to win their own liberation. We have popularized this policy in our literature. We put forward this policy in the legal mass organizations in which we work. We succeeded in the All-India Students' Federation and the All-India Kisan Sabha Executives but failed to convince the majority in the All-India Congress Committee at Wardha and in the All-India Trade Union Congress at Cawnpore. As the danger of fascist invasion is becoming imminent, a considerable section of the national movement is reorientating itself towards the war along the lines we have advocated. We were the first patriotic people's organization to raise the slogan of united national resistance to the fascist invaders. As the Cripps Mission has shown, under the stress of marching events, a considerable portion of the national leadership headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has adopted the policy which in the beginning we alone were advocating, viz., the cause of the United Nations is the cause of freedom and democracy, the Indian National Movement can realize its historic destiny only through the victory of the democratic camp, the people of India have to save their national existence and realize their own freedom by fighting and winning this war under their own National Government, a government that can rouse national patriotism and lead the people into an all-out national resistance to the fascist invaders of our motherland.

We differ with the policy of the British Government that a purely military defence of India is possible and all that the Indian people have to do is to let the existing government carry on. We are convinced that a total war on Indian soil cannot be successfully conducted except under the leadership of the nation's trusted leaders, except through the agency of a National Government which will symbolise the unity of the people with the Government and conduct the war as a real People's War.

We have no doubt that the cause of the United Nations is one, and the interests of all freedom-loving nations indivisible. We have no doubt that sooner than many yet imagine, the United Nations will take counsel together and agree with the patriotic Indian opinion that the only way to effectively meet and crush the fascist hordes on Indian soil is to win the free and wholehearted co-operation of the Indian people by persuading the British Government to concede the demand for a National Government. We have no doubt that the imperative need to defend our common motherland will make all the patriotic popular organizations of our country get ever closer together, forget the differences of the past, build a joint front for national resistance against the fascist invader and to win a National Government for the total mobilization of our people. To-day this is the general perspective we have and we work to build the unity of our people for national resistance. We will put forward such a policy in the coming meeting of the A.I.C.C....

To-day the danger to our country is great and imminent. To-day it is no more enough to have a general political policy and agitate for it among the people and our fellow-patriots. To-day all the Indian Communists, whether inside jails or outside, whether free or underground, are burning with an ardent desire to do all they can to co-operate with the existing war-efforts even under the present government, if we can do so IN AN HONOURABLE AND EFFECTIVE MANNER. We know that a large mass of our fellow-patriots consider such a course of action

anti-national. We differ with them and we are convinced that the most patriotic duty to-day is to do all we can to halt the fascist invaders, whatever the political conditions be. We realize that one of the most effective ways in which this could be done is to give our co-operation to existing war efforts if we are enabled to render it. This is our policy and our burning desire, yet in practice we are unable to implement it. What stands in our way is the policy of the government towards us—the continuance of its repressive policy against us.

We are convinced that if the Government changes its policy towards us and an unhindered and speedy all-out effort of the Indian Communists to co-operate with the existing war-effort is rendered possible, it will make not a little difference to the war-effort itself, it will enable us to convince a larger and larger section of Indian patriots, by our own example and through our press.

Just because the situation is desperate, just because it lies in the hands of the Government whether it will let us do all we can to fight the Japs and stand by our people that we are prepared to negotiate with the Government against which we have every reason to feel the most bitter. We give below our demands on the Government, demands which we think enable us to do all we can to help to resist the Japs, to intensify the war-efforts and win the support of our people for our policy and practice. We also give the plan of work which we will be able to undertake if the Government concedes our demands.

Our Demands on the Government

1. Unconditional release of all Communist prisoners and detenus.
2. Removal of restrictions on all Communists who have been interned, externed or otherwise restricted.
3. Withdrawal of warrants against all underground Communists.
4. Withdrawal of bans on the 'National Front', 'The New Age' and all other organs of the Communists in provincial languages.
5. Immediate grant of press declarations for new newspapers, journals and periodicals....

Our entire top and middle leadership is in jails. The little that we have been able to save has to function underground. These handicaps mean that in rapidly changing times like the present, we get reduced to practical ineffectiveness. No political organization can function effectively, and successfully carry its policy to the people if it is beheaded of its leadership.... Our comrades who are yet out are very young and inexperienced and rightly enough cannot cope with the tasks that befall them; it needs long practical experience and great political understanding to defend and popularize a policy with which the mass of patriotic opinion in a subject country does not yet agree. Our leaders are not free to do it, our rank and filers cannot do it on any broad scale, in any effective manner. It is no easy task to rouse even the working class among whom we have worked the longest and hardest, to co-operate with the Government war-efforts when they see that the Government does not even release their leaders, who are our own comrades. If the Government could be persuaded to give ALL the Communists the chance to work their best and hardest by accepting our above demands, we could in a very short time rouse and win over the entire working class, an overwhelming mass of student opinion, a large section of the peasants and a growing number of Congress workers to the plan of work we are outlining below and go in for an all-out effort....

It is sometimes said by the Government, despite our policy and the open declaration of the arrested comrades, that the Government cannot trust the detenus because it is difficult to find out who is a Communist and who a fifth-columnist. We will supply the list of all detenus, prisoners, internees, and externees who will either be our comrades or close sympathizers and loyal followers with 100% anti-fascist conviction. If the Government wants and agrees to our co-operation, it has to take our list on trust. The Government cannot be more interested in destroying the fifth-columnists than us—our comrades in Bengal are publicly facing the fifth-columnist Forward Bloc, fighting and denouncing their policy before the people and getting stabbed; one of us has already died a martyr's death at the hands of the Forward Bloc agents. We know the worth of our own comrades; if the government is convinced about our anti-fascist bona fides, our guarantees for every name we give in our list is the BEST guarantee the Government can conceivably get. No one can hate a fascist agent more than the Communists do.

We want immediate facilities to restart our organs. No political organization can succeed to win the people for its policy when even elementary freedom of the press is denied to it while all those who differ with it can popularize their differences with us in the legal press. To-day the curious position is this: the Communists are the most ardent pro-war Party but they alone cannot popularise their policy openly! Legal presses do not accept our propaganda material for fear of the Defence of India Rules, they refuse to go by the contents of material they are asked to print. They tell us that the Government yet continue its repressive policy towards us, they do not understand political stuff and since the Government has not released our comrades, they cannot risk their press by printing our material.... We want to begin with a weekly in English with Hindi, Urdu, Gurmukhi, Marathi, Bengali, Gujerathi, Telegu, Tamil and Malayalam editions. After we have got going, we will raise funds and demand declarations for Marathi and Hindi dailies. We have no doubt that pretty soon we will begin selling a lakh of copies of our weekly organs. We have also no doubt that the Government will find our organ the most effective war propaganda newspaper that has yet been produced in India....

Our Plan of Work

1. Countrywide Propaganda: We will send our released leaders on countrywide tours, to hold anti-fascist rallies, to rouse the patriotic instincts of the people in defence of our country, to fight panic and steel the morale of the people, to denounce the propaganda of the Forward Bloc, to combat the defeatist mentality of those who say it is too late to defend the country and whatever their motives, only prepare the ground for fifth-column propagandists who will get going with renewed vigour with every military disaster.

Hold anti-fascist melas throughout the country, with anti-fascist cartoons and poster-exhibitions, anti-fascist music and dancing troupes, staging anti-fascist playlets etc. The Government knows that after the Congress and the League, ours is the only organization that can do the above on a nationwide scale and on a popular scale.

2. Recruitment: Soon after our political propaganda drives has gathered momentum, we will undertake recruitment for all branches of the fighting forces or concentrate for any single service if the need for recruitment therein is the greatest.

We will do all we can to build fraternal relations between the army and the people.

3. Special Recruitment: We will undertake immediate recruitment of Suicide Squads whom we would desire to be trained for guerilla work under the direction of the regular

army authorities. They will be our own comrades and militant workers, peasants and student youth....

4. Civil Defence: We will wholeheartedly co-operate with the A.R.P. We will undertake the recruitment of honorary and paid A.R.P. workers. We will call upon our own comrades and sympathizers to offer themselves for any service in the A.R.P. they are most needed.

.... If we are allowed to function legally, we undertake to organize the official A.R.P. service throughout the working-class areas all over the country, throughout the whole province of Andhra and Malabar and in about 20 districts of Bengal. If legality is given to us, and our co-operation accepted in all the above areas, at least we could, on our own strength, organise the A.R.P. based on the support of the people, for we will get the co-operation of the people....

5. Production: The working class after the army at the front, is the most important force on which depends the fate of the war. We know that the chief reason for Government's not releasing our detenu leaders is their position as the unquestioned leaders of the workers and the general position of the Indian Communists as the dominating force in the working class and the fear on the part of the Government of strikes if we are allowed to work freely.

We state here our production policy in simple and clear terms to allay the Government's distrust if we may....

The wheels of production must not stop but keep running is a logical conclusion from our People's War policy. Though we stick to and defend the right of labour to strike, still it is our settled policy now to minimise strikes and settle all disputes through negotiations as far as it is humbly possible to do so. We are convinced if the Government releases workers' trusted leaders, who are also our leaders, and recognizes the Trade Unions, it will have no need to fear strikes and as far as we Communists can help it. All our endeavours will be directed to see that the workers' demands are settled through negotiations and at the conference table.

After we adopted the people's war policy we have not given any call for strike and have tried to settle the strikes that have spontaneously broken out, through negotiations. This as our practice should be conclusive evidence of how seriously we take our policy of support to the war.

Release the workers' leaders, recognize the Trade Unions, set up machinery for honest and quick disposal of labour disputes and we are convinced that both the nation and the Government will have every reason to be grateful for what the workers will willingly do.

We are afraid it is the existing labour policy of the Government that is leading production towards a serious disaster. With every wave of panic, the workers are evacuating with the rest of the citizens. The exodus of labour from industrial towns will not take place if their leaders are released and allowed to work freely among them. It will be our first task to stop the rot of panic. It needs no arguing that we can and we will do it. If we could organize general strikes in these very towns of these very workers, we can also stop their evacuation.

The worst, however, has not yet happened. When the Japanese invasion seriously begins, there will be waves after waves of panic sweeping over the land.... The workers along with the rest of the people will be caught in the elemental grip of panic and no Government machinery will be able to stop their exodus. Only we Communists will be successfully able to keep them at their jobs. We will be able to do this not because we are miracle-workers but because we have worked for the last 15 years among them, our comrades are their own trusted leaders,

we have organized all their past battles, we can talk to them in their own tongue and we alone can appeal to all that is great and noble in them. We have given our best in their service and they listen to us, respect us and recognize us to be their own leaders.

We go much further and declare that if the government releases all our comrades and recognises the Trade Unions we will work out schemes for speeding up production and launch mass drives calling upon the workers to speed up production for all they are worth and emulate the glorious example of their Soviet brothers.

The Government has so far relied on the profit-motive of the capitalists to keep war-production going. As the Jap menace is drawing near they are putting property above patriotism and raising a howl against scorched earth. Let the Government release the workers' leaders, take counsel with the workers' organizations and we will get the workers to bodily remove the factories and workshops from threatened areas to the interior wherever the Government and the army think they can be safely and continuously run. We will call upon the workers to follow the factories to their new sites. We have called upon the workers to undergo the hardships and agonies of month-long and general strikes in the interest of their own specific demands and they have unflinchingly followed us. To-day we will call upon them to rise to heights of heroism in defence of the nation, of the entire freedom-loving humanity, of the fundamental ideals of the working-class movement and we have no doubt they will follow us.

The least that we Indian Communists can do to resist the fascist invaders is to swing the working class wholeheartedly behind the war-efforts. All that the Government has to do is to let us work freely and our hardest and get its Labour and Civil Defence Departments keep regular contact with us.

6. Students: Under our political influence, the leaders of the Indian students' movement assembled at the Patna A.I.S.F. Conference accepted the People's War policy. After strenuous efforts they have been able win over the local student workers as well but not yet the mass of students. The reason is not far to seek: the policy to consider the war as a war which we must support whatever the political conditions be, is being opposed by all the major political parties—the Congress and the League, who hold that they cannot call the war their own unless their demands have been met. Among the political organizations, we Communists are the only ... [unclear] whose support the student workers can get to win over the student masses. We are however not allowed either our own press nor are our leaders released and those who are out have to work underground and thus the young student patriots are deprived of the only political support they could have received in winning the entire body of students for the war. We have no doubt if we are allowed to work openly and our comrades released, in a short while we will be able to win over the student youth who since the foundation of the A.I.S.F. have followed our general political policy and the plan of work we have put before them in the past.

Conclusion

Such is our plan of future work which we are eager to carry out if the Government will let us. It embodies what we consider to be our political duty towards our people and is according to us the most effective way in which we can help to defend our motherland.

If the Government thinks it wise not to revise its policy towards us and refuses the staple demands we make upon it which are nothing more than freedom of our persons and press to fight the fascists our hardest and best, we will continue doing what we are at present doing—general anti-Japanese and anti-fascist propaganda and work in the P.V.B. for the most elementary

protection of our people in co-operation with our fellow-patriots. We will not be able to carry out the plan of work we have outlined above not because we do not want to carry it out but because the Government renders it practically impossible for us to carry it out.

We, however, hope that what to us is our political duty would also be a military and practical necessity for the Government and that the Government will not let its political differences with us stand in the way of accepting our practical co-operation in the war-efforts and letting us do for the war effort what we Communists alone can do.

If the Government thinks our co-operation in war efforts is worth seeking and it desires further elucidation of our policy or plan of work, all that it has to do is to withdraw the warrants and any other existing government order against the following: P.C. Joshi, G. Adhikari, P. Sundarayya, Somnath Lahiri, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, D.S. Vaidya. They can speak with authority on behalf of all the Indian Communists, whether inside or outside jails. Let the Government give them the opportunity to meet together as free men and let the Government get in touch with P.C. Joshi direct.

This memorandum has the general support of the Communist leadership of India and is an informal draft of our policy and plan of work.

37. Letter from G. Adhikari to Jawaharlal Nehru, 3 May 1942, about the AICC War Resolution

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 1, NMML.

Dear Panditjee,

I am wanting [*sid*] to write this letter to you with a view to place certain considerations before you on the results of the A.I.C.C. Session. You do not know me so well as you do my friend and my Colleague, who met you during the time of Cripps negotiations at Delhi. That however should not matter.

We feel very strongly about the results of this A.I.C.C. Session. We think the country and the people are today, with these decisions, in a much worse position than before. I presume you are not very happy about them either. I may be wrong, but that was the impression I got from the resolution. The rather long personal and self-introspective—if I may say so—introduction to that speech gave me that impression. It appears you moved some amendments to the resolution, some of which were accepted and some rejected. Your rebuke to those who regard both sides in this war as on the same footing was of course well-worded.

That is in fact the point. The resolution is no doubt conceived in the spirit of complete neutrality between the two enemies and really draws no distinction between the two at all. The amendments, whatever they were, have made it no different at all. It breathes a spirit which is far away from what you said in that excellent press interview you gave immediately after the failure of the Cripps Mission. That is what perturbs me. That is what will perturb every patriot at this critical moment.

You may yourself be dissatisfied—but you will turn round upon us and say: Well what else could be done? You people do not realize the strong anti-British feeling of our people. No, comrade, we certainly realize it. The resolution, the whole proceedings of the A.I.C.C. serve to raise the anti-British feeling to a higher pitch. What is going to be its result? More anti-Imperialist, more pro-freedom feeling more confidence? I am afraid not. The anti-British feeling, accompanied by the attitude of neutrality and by a perspective of non-violent non

co-operation when the enemy reaches our homes in the interior, that anti-British feeling will be the mother to PRO-JAPANESE feelings, to the feelings of defeatism.

The A.I.C.C. has given no lead to our people in this grave hour. It has brought them no message of hope and confidence. It has shown them no path of action. It has for the time being raised them to the fever heat of anti-British feeling. When the fever cools down there will be a still greater relapse into defeatism and pro-Japanese sentiment. Maulana talked of those who secretly welcome the invader. The feeling is wide spread among the middle class following of the Congress. With the present position of the Congress that feeling would increase. It would certainly corrode the heart of our people and weaken their hand against the aggressor—to put it very mildly.

We have not won National Government. We have no arms yet to give to the people to organize a defence as befits honourable men and as will be really effective. This is true. The British are responsible for it. But then to tell the people, this is the end of it, we can no more win National Government, we can no more win arms, there is no time now, we have no alternative left now but to make non-violent jowhar of ourselves ... is to say the least a position of disastrous defeatism. The British have not given us National Government. They have not given us arms ... therefore we ask our people to lay down the only weapon they have got. The British won't allow us to defend our country effectively, therefore we cease all efforts to force them, and decide to 'defend' ourselves more ineffectively ... this is what the position of neutrality, of non-violent non-cooperation with the invader, of refusal to operate in the invaded area where the British army is fighting etc.—amounts to. We are, it seems to me, cutting our own nose to spite our face.

I wonder if I have made myself clear. What I was trying to point out is this that the position of the A.I.C.C. resolution is miles away from the position you took in that press statement. The speeches in the A.I.C.C. gave us a fore taste of how the middle (provincial) leadership of the Congress is going to interpret the resolution to the people. Typical of this spirit was the remark of a speaker who said referring to Japan as the enemy of the British Government (not our enemy!) I am afraid this is not the slip of an individual member. This is the spirit of neutrality with a vengeance. This is how a number of Congressmen are going to understand and interpret the resolution. Is this group to steel the hearts and strengthen the arms of our people? No, it is going to sow defeatism. You cannot fight the enemy effectively until you learn to hate him thoroughly. This is what Stalin told his people in his May Day order 2 days back.

This lesson we may learn with profit from Stalin especially at this hour. If there is one thing that we need above any other today is propaganda campaign up and down the country, a campaign preaching burning hatred against the Japanese aggressors, against the Nazis—as people who have designs on our country, as invaders who want to enslave our people. You will ask where will it lead us? It leads us to this, that it creates among the people the spirit of National defence. It at once gives a point and a direction to the P.V.B. and other activities. In the P.V.B. you are calling up the patriotic adult manhood of our country. You are organizing and disciplining it for civil defence, for emergency service. Defuse [*sid*] in them the anti-Japanese spirit, the consciousness of what is really at stake in this war when it will be fought on our own soil—and they will yet be the basis for partisan bands and guerillas tomorrow. I am sure in spite of the British, our people will find arms to fight the invader. But steel their hearts with the anti-Japanese spirit—even the Chinese did for years before 1937. Do not poison them with neutrality—that breeds defeatism. Our boys are in the P.V.B. But the tendency is to oust them

just because they carry on anti-Japanese agitation, just because they say it is our war, the war of the defence and freedom of our country. This resolution will only sharpen this tendency.

I have deliberately refrained from referring to the other political controversies which arose in this session. My only purpose was to point out to you one aspect of the resolution as we see it. This I did because I felt that it may appeal to you and you may find it worthwhile exchanging ideas as to how the likely bad consequences of the resolution could be remedied. Besides we would like to know whether the Congress is going to expel those of its members who will carry on patriotic anti-Japanese propaganda, who would go on explaining the larger issues that are at stake. Certain workers, kisan and students would be carrying on vigorous propaganda against neutrality and fighting defeatism. Would Congressmen who work therein be expelled? Such are the questions which arise. I think it is urgently necessary to prevent the resolution being interpreted as one of rabid neutrality. It should not act as a fetter on those who are working for the 'spiritual' mobilization of the people, as the Chinese call it, for rallying them for an all our National resistance to the invader by every available means.

Whatever the disagreements, there should be agreement on one point: to rouse the people to patriotic anti-Japanese anti-aggressor consciousness, to rouse in them the spirit of manly national resistance at all costs. Our people are going to resist the invader with whatever arms they get, co-ordinating this partisan resistance with the British Army. They are not going to lower their 'shan' thereby but raise it a hundred thousandfold. If things continue as they are, it will be only in few places and only through a few bands; but the glorious martyrdom of these handful will do a great deal to wipe off the shame of our disarmed state about which we have wailed long and loud enough. You may not approve of the Communists when they talk about recruitment and co-operating with the war effort which hits the aggressor and protects the people, but remember it is his burning patriotism that impels him to do so. Anti-British demagoguery plus neutrality means defeatism and more defeatism among the masses. It is not the soil on which we can grow the harvest of patriotic defenders of our motherland. It is the soil on which the enemy—the new imperialist enslaver will grow his ugly crop.

That is why we appeal to you to see that the resolution is not taken advantage of by pro-fascist elements, but that it is interpreted and implemented in the spirit of your press interview and in the light of your statement re guerillas and 'scorched earth'.

You will pardon me for having addressed this rather long and rambling letter. It is the earnest appeal of a patriot to one who occupies a unique position in our great National organization and who can do a great deal to remedy the likely disastrous consequences of the A.I.C.C. resolution.

Yours fraternally,

G. Adhikari

38. Clarificatory Statement Issued by K.M. Ashraf and Sajjad Zaheer about Their Support to C. Rajagopalachari's Resolution

The Bombay Chronicle, 5 May 1942.

Allahabad, May 4

Dr. K.M. Ashraf and Mr. Sajjad Zaheer, members of the A.I.C.C. in a statement issued to the Press say that since surprise had been expressed in some quarters that the Communist members supported Mr. Rajagopalachariar's resolution on Congress-League unity and Pakistan and

since the fact that both the Communist members, who voted for the resolution happened to be Muslims had been underlined, it was necessary to give a clarification.

They say that they supported Rajaji because he alone had the intrepid and clear-sighted patriotism to declare that it was impossible for the people to think in terms of neutrality or passivity during invasion by an enemy power, and it was not practicable to organize any effective defence independently and unco-ordinated with the defence measures of the Government. They supported Rajaji because he boldly stood for Congress–League agreement for national unity, or an all-out national resistance to the aggressor and because he wanted to make an effort to win National Government based on popular strength and unity.

Dr. Ashraf and Mr. Sajjad Zaheer make it clear that although they want Congress–League understanding, their stand on Pakistan demand of the Muslim League is not the same as that of Mr. Rajagopalachariar and that they wanted to move an amendment to that part of the resolution, but were not allowed.

They say: ‘We would stoutly oppose the Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah’s conception, which is division of India on the basis of religion. But we recognize that the unity of India would be strengthened now and in the future if the Congress expressed clearly that it was not thinking in terms of compelling any territorial unit having separate national history, language and culture, etc., to remain in the Indian Union against its freely expressed and established will. We recognise the right of such a unit to Autonomous State existence and to separation, if it so desired.’

39. Handwritten Note from R. Tottenham, Home Department, 9 May, about Achhar Singh Cheena’s Message from Moscow
GOI Home Political File No. 226/1942, NAI.

Achhar Singh Cheena is this man who went to Moscow.

His release was arranged between IB and Punjab CIC and Punjab Govt. and I understand he has already passed on this message ... from Moscow to various quarters i.e. that it was the duty of Communists to help the war.

40. Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of April 1942 on Removal of Restrictions on and Release of Communists
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

As Mrs. Ushabai Dange, a second rank communist, who was released from detention on 23rd December 1941 but was subjected to restrictions on her movements and activities, stated that she had now changed her attitude towards the war and requested that she may be permitted to take part in meetings organized in connection with A.R.P. and civil defence work, and those held in order to allay panic amongst the workers who were leaving the City, the restrictions imposed on her were removed from April 25th.

Similarly, Mr. R.S. Nimbkar, who had been under detention since June 1941, was released on April 27th, after he had written a letter to Government stating that he was not a communist, that he had anti-Fascist views, that he advocated conciliation for industrial disputes and particularly so in war time and that if released he would not do anything dangerous.

41. Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of April 1942 about Communist Activities

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Communists—There have been increased signs of communist activity. In Monghyr, Karjanand Sharma has been forming 'activist groups' while Ratan Roy and Biswa Bikash Moitra, both ex-security prisoners, have been making efforts to organize students. In Dhanbad communists have started a 'Youth Association' the members of which are talking of obtaining arms, ostensibly to meet Japanese aggression but really for committing dacoity in order to raise funds. Purnendu Mazumdar is active in this area. In Patna Ali Ashraf and Chandra Sekhar Prasad Sinha, two of the detenues released, but placed under restraint in Patna according to the advice of Mr. Justice Dhavle, have lost no time in resuming underground operations side by side with open activities such as agitation for the release of anti-Fascist prisoners.

42. Extract from a Secret Report Received from the UP Special Branch, 4 May 1942, about Speeches by Communists

GOI Home Political File No. 226/42, NAI.

2. Harish Chandra Tiwari delivered his lecture in the same tone as reported previously and said that simultaneously the Communists would create anti-Japanese atmosphere and anti-British feeling amongst the masses so that they may capture power to take the war in their own hands and get their demands met by Government. He condemned M.N. Roy for his pro-British and anti-Congress activities and said that Communists did not favour Gandhi's mass movement but they could not separate themselves from the Congress and would not be able to create anti-Japan feeling against the masses unless they worked from the Congress platform speaking against the British as well.

3. ... Another communist explained that although the Communists had decided to work against the Fascist powers and to spread pro-war feelings, yet they had not changed their basic aims and technique of the party.... They were anti-imperialists even now as they had been before and considered British Imperialism to be the enemy of people's cause. They were anxious to form 'national Governments' because they realize that they could not turn this war into 'people's war' as long as British Imperialism existed in India. They had given no undertaking that they would not indulge in anti-British Imperialism activities. He added that P.C. Joshi had given a copy of 'Forward to Freedom' to Sir R. Maxwell which showed clearly the line of the Communists. If the Communists failed to form a National Government or the Congress decided to start a mass movement they would decide their line of action according to the situation of the country. At present the Congress were sticking to non-embarrassment policy and so they could work on Congress platform. They had been doing their level best to create anti-Fascist feeling in the mind of the masses but it is natural that the intellectual classes cannot hate Fascism only. They view Imperialism as bad as Fascism.

Sd/- S. K. Pilditch

14.7.(?)1942



43. Released Communists in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Punjab Government decided to release eight of the leading Communists of this province on the 1st of May. This action, which was greeted with much approval in political circles, has been rewarded by a visible increase in the volume of communist pro-war propaganda, accompanied though it is by condemnation of British Imperialism and demands for the establishment of a national government and the arming of the populace. Communist appeals to co-operate in the war effort are, however, making little headway at present, and meetings held to celebrate 'May Day' and an 'anti-Japanese Day' on the 1st and 5th of May respectively were for the most part poorly attended. At the same time, Communists are once again seeking to establish an alliance with the Punjab Kisan Committee, though there is some evidence to show that the latter body has not entirely abandoned its anti-war campaign.

The new trend in communist policy has aroused bitter opposition from Congressmen and Socialists, and this and the defection of Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din at Allahabad were the main questions on which Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru was asked to pronounce in the course of a brief visit to Lahore *en route* to Kulu....

44. G. Ahmed's Notes on His Interviews with P.C. Joshi, 12 May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

I had a four hours' talk with P.C. Joshi this afternoon.... On the whole a pleasant person but uninspiring.

2. I let him talk as much as he wanted because it became at once clear to me that he was bubbling over with his newly acquired ideas and was most anxious to air them. Two or three strains stood out prominently in his talk and were repeated over and over again, i.e., strong hatred of the Axis Powers and particularly of the Japanese, the desire to fight them in every practicable way and claims of extensive Communist influence over labour.

3. I gradually brought him round to a discussion of the 'Memorandum on Communist Policy and Plan of Work' which we have already seen. I asked him if it had the full authority of the Communist Party. He said it had and offered to sign the document at once, if I so desired, on behalf of the Party. He added that the Party leaders in jail had not been consulted in regard to details but that their general views were known and their complete acceptance of the memorandum was assumed. He had no doubt whatever that the memorandum would be fully endorsed by the leaders as soon as they were able to meet and issue a public manifesto on the subject. (We have information that copies of the memorandum have been sent to some of the Communist leaders in jail.) He later said that the release of Communists could, if necessary, be made contingent upon their signing the memorandum.

4. I then confronted him with the relevant passages from 'Forward to Freedom', bearing upon such matters as soldiers' alleged grievances, A.R.P., Civic Guards, War Fund collections and labour demands and asked him to reconcile what he had said in that publication with the statements made in the memorandum.... His reply was interesting. He said that the 'Forward to Freedom'—which he claimed had received the approbation of Rajagopalachariar—was a political document written for the benefit of (as he put it) 'the patriots'; the memorandum was a

non-political document outlining in simple terms the practical programme of the Party in relation to the war. He did not think—and was not prepared to admit—that the doctrines enunciated in the booklet cut across the statements made in the memorandum. When I asked him if the memorandum superseded the booklet, he said: 'No'.... It was clear that he was not prepared to repudiate the 'Forward to Freedom' outlook: indeed, to do so would amount to renunciation of the entire Communist ideology which the Party could hardly afford, or be expected to do. He urged that the true worth of all Communist writings should be assessed in the light of the overriding consideration that the war against Japan must be won. 'You should judge us, not by our words, but by our actions', he said, 'and our actions will be before you'. He added that if we doubted the good faith of the Party in any particular sphere of the suggested Plan of Work, e.g., service in the armed forces in any special capacity, we could exclude the Party members from it, if we so wished. But he was full of protestations of the Party's good faith....

5. He was confident of the ability of the Communist Party to steady labour provided Labour Unions were recognized and labour leaders allowed to function under the supervision of Labour Commissioners.... He said that the intensification of war production was the primary Communist objective and although Communists would continue to support T.U.C. demands for higher wages, dearness allowance, no curtailment of the right to strike, etc., they were not wedded to these demands and must treat them as secondary to war requirements. There was no question of sabotaging war industries or essential services; the Communist endeavour would be to avoid creation of conditions wherein strikes would become possible.... Curiously enough, he had very little to say about the peasants' grievances and Communist interest in redressing them. Perhaps he realized that the peasants had few grievances and no demands to make in these days of comparative prosperity for them. I asked him if the 'no-rent, no-tax' slogan was abandoned; he said it was....

7. Conversation then turned on the Communist attitude towards Congress and M.N. Roy. As regards Congress, he repeated the time-honoured formula that Communists would try and convert it. There appeared to be no likelihood however, that the Communist Party would build up a real opposition against Congress. As for M.N. Roy, he said he was a 'traitor' but the Communists intended to 'ignore' him completely. I left it at that.

8. Joshi seemed to realize that the ban on the Communist Party of India was not going to be removed. He asked for the revival of the 'National Front' and the 'New Age' ... and he said that as soon as these papers were revived, all 'illegal' Communist writings, such as the 'Communist', 'Party Letters' and 'Party Organisers', would cease. Bombay and Delhi were to be the centres of Party propaganda. He at first stuck to the demand for the general release of Communist detenus and convicts but later said that he would produce a list of 50 Communists whose release he would ask for in order to be able to put the Party's pro-war programme into immediate operation. From what he said, it appeared that he was likely to propose the release of practically all the leaders detained by the Central Government and several important leaders detained by Provincial Governments convicted in Provinces. He promised to see me tomorrow and show me the list. He was most anxious that everything should be done most speedily so that no time was lost in enabling the Party to start its pro-war work at the earliest possible moment. I gave him no indication of our likely reactions to his proposals.

9. As a result of this discussion, the dominant impression left on my mind is that Joshi and his friends (or at least such of them as he has been able to consult) are genuinely pro-war and anti-Axis and are ready to show in a practical way their apparently intense desire to help in the

war. In spite of the tall talk in the 'Forward to Freedom'—which is intended largely for Party consumption—they will in all probability not attempt to sabotage the war effort or do anything to assist the enemy. The building up of the Party organization on a secure footing is, however, an ever-present consideration with them and hence their anxiety to gain control over labour....

10. These are first impressions. As I have mentioned before, Joshi is a voluble but not very coherent talker and it is no easy matter to hold him down to the discussion on any single point. Hence the difficulty of obtaining from him a more clear-cut exposition of the present Communist policy.

45. Notes on R.M. Maxwell's Interview with P.C. Joshi, 15 May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

I interviewed Mr. P.C. Joshi yesterday evening (14th May). He is young, very much of the student type and talks very fast and elliptically. He is thus rather difficult to follow and I would suspect him of thinking in the manner in which he talks. He was, however, ready to talk quite frankly and I think there is no doubt that he is convinced of his own sincerity and that of his party in their present attitude towards the war. It will, however, be remembered that only a short time ago, they were equally emphatic about the need of destroying British imperialism by all methods, even Fifth-Column activities. I put this to him and invited him to explain his change of front. He said that it occurred in November last when the communists sponsored a resolution in the T.U.C. and that they had been devoting hard thought to it for some months previously.... I put it to him whether he was not afraid that if with the assistance of those who now thought like himself the Allies were successful in defeating the Axis Powers there would not be a danger or reversion to the old form and objects of Government against which the communist party had always been fighting: in other words, what did he really conceive as the future object to be gained for his party, in assisting the Allies to defeat Fascism. He explained that he believed that in the process of winning the war many things that he regarded as desirable would become accomplished facts and that he did not fear that after the war the Allied Governments would revert to their previous attitude towards world domination. World freedom would in fact be established by an Allied victory. With a sudden descent into realism he added that anyhow nothing would be possible unless Japan and the Axis Powers were first defeated....

2. After elucidating his theoretical ideas I then took the talk on to the plan of the practical methods to be employed and referred to the methods indicated in his pamphlet 'Forward to Freedom'. He explained that that was the language he used in addressing the people on their own level, while his manifesto which, he contended, was not inconsistent with anything in his pamphlet was the manner in which he described his object when speaking to Government.... The main question, of course, that we have to consider here is whether the methods which communists would follow if they were free to pursue them would in fact cause more unsettlement than they were worth in terms of united support for the war effort. In dealing with the communists the main reason for action against them has always been not so much their ultimate theories and objects as the methods which they wish to pursue.... I put it to Mr. Joshi that even supposing that their objects were good the zeal of the communists might outrun their discretion in such matters. But he indignantly repudiated the suggestion.

3. I then questioned Mr. Joshi about the attitude of the communists towards the Congress and asked how he reconciled his strong anti-Fascist convictions with support of the party which was more than a little inclined to make terms with Japan. He expressed his own certainty that that was not the attitude of the Congress and claimed to know the minds of most of the members of the Working Committee. But it was notable that he only mentioned Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad as instances of anti-Japanese sentiments. Apparently he regarded the Congress as justified in trying to obtain control of the government of this country on the ground that after 200 years of subjection they felt that they could not fully mobilize the country for war. From the Memorandum as well as from Mr. Joshi's pamphlet it appears that the communist party similarly feel that a 'national' Government would be better qualified to lead the country in war. But the C.P.I. are prepared to go, I think, a good deal further than the Congress in the way of immediate cooperation with the present Government. In other words, as I put it to Mr. Joshi, the Congress are anti-British first and anti-Japanese only a long way afterwards while the communists are anti-Japanese first and anti-British afterwards. Here, however, he disclaimed any anti-British feeling on the part of the communists and I rather gathered that such sentiments would be contrary to the doctrine of world brotherhood.

4. I then questioned Mr. Joshi about the probable relations of the communist party (if they were allowed to function) with other parties also working for the same ostensible objects and whether the advent of the communist party into this field would not merely be a way of setting up rivalries which would actually impede war production. He claimed that the communist party, in spite of long suppression, had a preponderating influence in the Trade Union Congress and he evidently thought that the communists had the best title to come forward as leaders of labour. He claims also to have control over the All-India Students' Federation and apparently (although vaguely) over the Kisan movement. When asked he stated that his programme would also embrace the kisans, but he did not appear very interested in the subject and I think that (like M.N. Roy) he thinks mainly in terms of urban labour. When asked about his relations with the Indian Federation of Labour he was rather reticent and he did not noticeably respond to the suggestion which I put to him that all those who regarded it as their primary object to defeat Fascism first and to leave other things till afterwards should be prepared to work together and to welcome one another's assistance.

5. I had no time to go into other matters of detail but ascertained from Mr. Joshi that he would remain in Delhi for some days and be available if wanted for further discussion. He emphasized in conclusion his anxiety that the members of his party should be released as soon as possible in order that time might not be lost in starting on his programme of work.

46. Report of CIO Lahore, 23 May 1942, on P.C. Joshi and the All India Students National Defence Conference
GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

P.C. Joshi, who appears to have assumed a pre-eminent position in the affairs of the Communist Party of India, controlled from behind the scenes the proceedings of the 'All India Students National Defence Conference' recently held in Delhi under the auspices of the A.I.S.F. (Communist Section). The conference gave Communist leaders an opportunity to meet together and discuss common policy.

Joshi appears to nourish hopes of obtaining Nehru's active sympathy to an anti-Fascist stand. The Communists have adopted a neutral attitude towards Rajagopalachari's move because

they doubt his sincerity and because they do not favour Pakistan; they are however evolving a scheme of their own for self-determination on a 'cultural' instead of a communal basis. The C.P.C. is maintaining its traditional attitude of respectful regard for Congress though it does not approve of its present policy. The party hopes very optimistically to work from within Congress and increase its influence therein. As regards co-operation in the war effort, the party is anxious to be quite independent of other political groups and not to be under Government direction. The Communists will continue to concentrate their energies towards capturing power with the object of establishing a Soviet Government in this country. They are convinced that 'British Imperialism' will automatically come to an end once Fascism is defeated. They hope in the meantime to exploit 'the present weakness of British Imperialism' and the consequent relaxation of police vigilance to reorganise the party system.

47. Activities of Released Communists and Reactions to Them: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Punjab for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

2. Political. (a) Communists and the war—An accurate appreciation of the effect of the release of the 8 leading communists of the Province is not yet possible, but first impressions are in some ways encouraging in spite of the obvious long-term danger of the experiment. Attempts to persuade the public at urban meetings that the war is a 'people's war' met with considerable opposition and quickly convinced the Communists that they had completely miscalculated the strength of the Congress hold over the towns and the depth of anti-British feeling. After the C.P.I. meeting at Delhi on May 17th, they therefore changed their tactics and decided to concentrate on preventing obstruction of the war effort by opposing strikes and supporting the maintenance of law and order, while maintaining the right to represent the grievances of peasants and labourers, and on promoting recruitment and increased production. This latter objective they decided to achieve by an economic and national appeal which would be combined with attacks on Britain for having failed to develop the military and industrial strength of the country. At the same time they also decided to cooperate with Government in supporting the A.R.P. and civil defence services and civic guards, but to press for increased non-official control. These decisions were subsequently ratified at a meeting of the Punjab Kisan Committee held at Lahore on May 20th and 21st and attended by some 450 members when instructions were issued to all kisan workers in the Province to support the war effort, demand the formation of a national Government and the release of all security prisoners and, without coming into open conflict with it, to try and capture Congress from within. A series of rural conferences has been arranged to develop this change of policy, but it remains to be seen whether pro-war or anti-British propaganda will predominate. The immediate aim of the Communists is to win the war, but their final objective remains the destruction of British Imperialism and the establishment of their own system of Government.

The pro-war Communist policy has hardened feeling against them among followers of Congress and the Congress Socialist Party; the Radical Democratic party is jealous of their increasing influence and skeptical of the practicability of their combination of anti-British and anti-Fascist propaganda; the students have been generally antagonistic, although the more genuine communist section among them approves the party's change of policy. The Akalis, who

have no delusions regarding the long-term threat of Communism and dislike its anti-religious appeal, are uneasy and suspicious of this new challenge to their supremacy among the Sikhs and control of the Gurdwaras. It is at present impossible to see how the more orthodox political parties will eventually adjust themselves to the Communist threat to their authority, but the forces which have been let loose may bring about a more realistic approach to the war and harden public feeling against external aggression, although it seems unlikely that they will be able to make much headway against the Congress propaganda machine and the apathy and fatalism of the country.

48. Anti-Japanese Aggression Fortnight Observed by Communists:
Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the First Half of June
1942

File No. 1/42-SB, CID Delhi, Special Branch, Chief Commissioner's Office.

Communist workers have been observing an Anti-Japanese Aggression fortnight and in this connection have staged nine public meetings with audiences ranging from fifty to three hundred. Speakers explained the present communist position, called for united opposition to the Japanese and demanded a Congress-Muslim League alliance and the formation of a National Government. At all the meetings resolutions were passed demanding the removal of the ban on the Communist party of India. The public have shown little interest in this communist propaganda.

49. Copy of a Secret Note, 19 June 1942, by DIG of Police, CID Punjab,
Received with CIO Lahore

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

I had a long talk this morning with Teja Singh Sutantar and Achhar Singh Chhina who were later joined by Sohan Singh Josh. As the result of my conversations with this trio, it is now possible to get a clearer idea of their immediate and ultimate objectives. The most sincere communist of the three is undoubtedly Achhar Singh Chhina, but there is not much to choose between him and Teja Singh. Sohan Singh Josh is a bad third. They all admitted that they were out for mass revolution after the war which they said would be achieved by educating the labourers and peasants to demand their rights and forcing Government to concede them. They look forward to the intensive industrialisation of India and believe that the forces let loose by this war must lead to a communist or at least socialist form of Government in most countries after the war. They realize, however, that socialism and communism can make no progress in the event of an Axis victory and are, therefore, prepared to support the war effort, hoping no doubt that in the post-war period they will be able to seize and retain power....

Their main object in seeing me was, of course, to demand the release of more members of their party. They are being hounded by the Congress, C.S.P. and Akalis and feel that they are too few to be able to put across their propaganda. The fact that only 8 of the party have been released in the Punjab has made them suspect and they are being accused of being Government agents. If other members of their party were released, this suspicion would be removed. I explained to them that in Government's opinion there are very few genuine communists left among the security prisoners, but that Government is prepared to release those whom

it considers genuine, provided that it is satisfied that the release of the first batch is having positively beneficial and not harmful results. I also told them that Government is not much encouraged to try further experimental releases so long as bitter anti-British attacks constitute at least 50% of the communist propaganda speeches at public meetings, and also told them that Government was fully aware of the instructions given to Indian communists at Moscow and the long-term objectives of communism and that it had no intention of furthering them. I went on to explain to them that it was illogical and absurd to attack Russia's ally, Britain, if they really wished to help Russia and that, if they were genuine supporters of Russia, they must support her Allies unreservedly. Their answer to this was that if they supported Britain wholeheartedly, they would be as impotent a political force as Roy's Radical Democratic Party, but they promised to damp down their anti-British speeches at public meetings....

The State and Security prisoners whom they would particularly like released are:

1. Wasdev Singh.
2. Chanan Singh.
3. Harminder Singh Sodhi.
4. Mubarak Saghar.
5. Baba Vasakha Singh
6. Harkishen Singh Surjit.
7. Dr. Bhag Singh.
8. Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna.
9. Hari Singh, M.L.A.
10. Rur Singh, M.L.A.
11. Santa Singh Gandiwind.
12. Bhag Singh Canadian.
13. Harnam Singh Chamak.
14. Yog Raj.
15. Dhanwantri.
16. Tikka Ram Sukhan.
17. Tehl Singh Bhangali

The last four are terrorists, or as the communists say, ex-terrorists. They are particularly anxious for Dhanwantri to be released, but at present I would not trust any of these ex-terrorists.... For the present, however, I am in favour of going slow and watching the 8 men released closely for a further period of one month or so....

.... The communist change of attitude towards the war took place in December, 1941. Its origin has never been satisfactorily established. It is suspected that it was due to instructions issued by the Communist Party of Great Britain, but it is equally possible that it was inspired by the underground leaders of the C.P.I. who saw in this change of policy an opportunity to secure the release of communist workers and enable them to join in the scramble for power in the event of British rule in India weakening. It must also be remembered that the C.P.I. is really distinct from the Kirti Kisan Party in the Punjab and this latter party is an off-shoot of the Ghadr Party in America. Although there are a few genuine communists in the Ghadr Party, the majority of the members of this party are little more than subversive and revolutionary agitators whose aim is the establishment of Sikh Rule in the Punjab. For these reasons it is necessary to go slow, but at the same time to remember the immediate value of the communists as an opposition party to Congress and the Akalis.

50. Report on Communist Activities in Central Provinces and Berar for Half Year Ending on 30 June 1942

M.P. Secretariat Records, Political and Military Department, Government of the Central Provinces and Berar, 1939-44, File No. 241.

The news of the change of the Communist attitude to the war was received in this Province at the end of December 1941. In the last report on Communism, mention was made of the Patna Conference of the All India Students' Federation. At this, it was resolved to support the war effort. Anti-Imperialism was not given up and the hope was freely expressed that the war would bring to an end both Fascism and Imperialism and would see the institution of rule by the masses. Speakers on occasions certainly let themselves go in condemnation of British Imperialism but apart from this, the wish to help in the war appears amongst some to be genuine and in this Province there has been nothing to suggest that this attitude is a blind to hide dangerous underground revolutionary activities. The change in their war policy was so drastic that of necessity Communists started propagating it slowly and at first made efforts to win over only their own friends and to consolidate their position. By the end of March, there was a sign of an increase in the tempo of propaganda and arrangements had been started for an anti-Fascist Rally in Nagpur during the 1st week of May and a Kisan Sabha on the same lines in Amraoti on the 20th May. At Nagpur, an organizing Committee was set up by the Kisan Sabha, Students' Federation and Trade Unions and vigorous propaganda was carried on at Nagpur, Wardha, Mandla, Jubbulpore, Saugor, Akola, Buldana, and Amraoti by S.S. Chauthmel, B.N. Mukherjee, P.Y. Deshpande, P.D. Marathe, D.D. Rajimwale, A.B. Bardhan, G.M. Huddar and others all the whom stressed the necessity of forming a united front to resist Japanese aggression, denied the Japanese claim to be the liberators of India and demanded the arming of the people. The rally which had to be postponed owing to the Organisers' inability to secure a suitable President was eventually held on the 24th May under the president ship of K.M. Ashraf, a member of the All India Congress Committee and leader of the Communist section. Due to lack of funds—as no donations or subscriptions were received the Pandal could not be completed. The rally commenced with an attendance of 10,000 which dwindled to 2,000. Congress and Soviet flags were conspicuous and effigies of Tojo, Mussolini and Hitler were prominently displayed. Dr. Ashraf averred that this was no time for recrimination and that the absence of arms as a plea for not doing anything was a plea of despair. A resolution was passed that in view of the imminent menace of Fascism, joint fronts should be formed for an all out resistance to aggression, Defence Councils should be formed, propaganda to counteract panic and strengthen morale should be carried on, measures to establish better relations between troops and civilians be instituted and the work of volunteer civil defence brigades be coordinated. The formation of a National Government and the arming of the people were pre-requisites to such action. The Rally was not a success and to stimulate their waning popularity, the Communists resorted to criticizing Government over the grain situation. On 11th June, a letter came to notice from P.C. Joshi to B.N. Mukherjee warning Communists and the 'Bhavitavya' to avoid like poison, offers of monetary aid from Government. He also outlines a scheme for opening an anti-Japanese People's Volunteer Camp at Malad with G.M. Huddar as Military Instructor.

The breach in the Congress and Communist section of the All India Students' Federation appeared to cause Congressmen some anxiety. In February, Gandhi sent Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to Benares to try and compose the differences but a meeting of the representatives of both

parties resulted only in recriminatory speeches and a widening of the breach. The Congress section of the Student's Federation which at first showed some signs of taking advantage of the change in the Communists attitude to the War to regain control of the All India Students' Federation has done nothing. The Communist section decided to eradicate the slipshod methods of working by Provincial branches, and thus provide a centralized and coordinated movement by the introduction of a series of party circulars akin to the Communist Party of India Circulars. The branches in this Province, which are affiliated to the Communist section, have repeatedly reiterated the necessity of supporting the new Communist pro-War policy. At Independence Day (26th January) meeting at Nagpur and Amraoti speakers emphasized the need to help in the war effort and expressed sympathy for Russia whilst at Akola, Huddar advocated military training to students. The Jubbulpore students observed anti-Fascist Day on 5th April. Speakers declared that only Russia and China had been able to withstand Fascist aggression and a resolution was passed demanding a National Government. The Communist section of the Federation held a special session in Delhi from 15th to the 18th May. Lalita Shanker Agnihotri, B.N. Mukherjee, A.B. Bardhan from this Province attended. Resolutions passed at the Conference were reported to have been drafted by P.C. Joshi of the Communist Party of India. Students of late have been attempting to popularize the question of a Guerilla training camp. The camp organized by the Punjab Students' Federation at Lahore in June was considered a success. Om Prakash Mehta of Nagpur attended and efforts are being made to organise a similar camp in this Province.

The office of the 'Student' was transferred to Delhi at the end of May, and from circulars which have recently come to notice from the Head Office to Provincial branches; it would appear that the authorities are still experiencing financial difficulties, due partly to be failure of provinces to pay up their dues.

Communist propaganda has also been spread amongst the peasantry. At the Taluka Kisan Conference at Yeotamal on the 21st April, T.G. Joshi stressed the need for popular support to the War effort and the evils of Fascism. The All India Kisan Sabha Conference held at Bihta on the 16th May, was dominated by the Communists. P.D. Marathe, of Nagpur was the only delegate from this Province. In the meantime, propaganda was carried on for the Kisan Sabha Rally held at Amraoti on the 20th May. A Volunteers Camp was held in which lectures were given on conditions in Russia and China and a Soviet Exhibition was opened by G.M. Huddar on the 17th May. The Rally was held under the presidentship of Indulal Yajnik of Bombay. Speakers stressed the necessity of resisting Fascism and not hindering the war effort, since Britain and America were the only countries which could aid Russia. Resolutions were passed calling on Kisans to co-operative in the war effort and urging the formation of a National Government.

The idea of organizing a Friends of the Soviet Union in the Province originated from Mian Iftikharuddin of Punjab during the All India Congress Committee Session at Wardha in January. A provisional committee was formed of G.M. Huddar, P.Y. Deshpande, P.D. Marathe, V.D. Brahma, K.T. Deshmukh and D.L. Jaiwant and a conference was held in Nagpur on the 13th February in which speeches were made against Fascism and Imperialism and in favour of a socialist form of Government all over the world. Branches have since been formed in Nagpur, Jubbulpore, Amraoti, Akola and Yeotmal. A series of lectures under the auspices of the Union and the Students' Federation were delivered by G.M. Huddar and P.D. Marathe at Nagpur, from the 3rd April on Chinese Guerilla tactics, the defence of India, and the necessity of eradicating Fascism.

Communists have been able to make much headway in labour circles chiefly due to R.S. Ruiker's influence with the result that they have only been able to utilize labour meetings in Jubbulpore, Amraoti, Akola and partially in Nagpur to propagate their new pro-war policy.

At Jubbulpore, B.N. Gupta, S.D. Mukherji and J.P. Misra have been stirring up the Burn & Co. workers and Municipal sweepers to demand an increase in wages and a dearness allowance. A mazdoor Volunteer Corps was organized and daily parades of Burn & Co. workers were held from the 3rd April under the supervision of Gupta and Mukherjee. At Amraoti, S.D. Deshmukh, M.D. Deshpande, Dr. B.K. Dewanji and H.N. Muley exhorted Ellichpore and Badnera moll-hands to press for similar demands. At Akola, agitation was carried out by B.G. Meshram and R.M. Pendse, but a split occurred in the Textile Union resulting in R.M. Pendse and J.N. Kolhatkar breaking away to join Ruiker and forming an Akola Girni Kamdar Union of which Kolhatkar is president, while Meshram assumed control of the Akola Textile Union. There was some agitation amongst workers at the Kapa (Raipur) Military Supply Dept. during the middle of June over the question of payment of wages. The Students' Federation formed a Labour Union with Rajendra Kumar Chaube as president but has not been able to affect labour to any extent.

May Day was observed in Nagpur, Jubbulpore, Raipur, Saugor, Akola and Amraoti. At Nagpur, the Communists at a meeting organized by the Students' Federation, Press Workers' Association, Bidi Workers' Union and Kisan Sabha called on all parties to unite against Fascism and passed a few anti-Imperialist remarks whilst at a separate meeting of the Nagpur Textile Union, Provl; Press Workers, and Hindustan Red Army, M.L. Bagdi criticized Government for failing to arm the people. At Akola, B.G. Meshram advocated the formation of a National Govt. and at Jubbulpore and Amraoti processions were taken out.

In June 1942, a circular came to notice from P.C. Joshi to Lalita Shanker Agnihotri announcing the starting of a paper called the 'Peoples' War' from 03.07.1942 in English, Hindi, Marathi and Urdu with the avowed object of carrying the people's war. B.N. Mukerjee issued a circular to all students calling for support to the organ as Rs. 500/- were expected from the Province. Soviet Day, 22.06.1942 was celebrated by Communists at Nagpur and Katol and by members of the Students' Federation at Jubbulpore Mandla and Raipur and at Badnera (Amraoti).

Pro-Russian speeches were delivered by O.P. Mehta, P.D. Marathe and others at Nagpur and by Purushottam Purohit and Vithalrao Bhatt at Katol.

At Jubbulpore, B.N. Gupta, R.C. Jain, S.D. Mukerji praised the Soviet system and Russia's resistance to the Axis while Shyamlal and S.P. Chandpuria spoke on similar lines at Mandla.

B.N. Mukerji gave a tirade at Raipur against capitalism, urged resistance to Fascism and Imperialism and predicted an armed revolution after the war.

At Badnera H.N. Mule and N.T. Raja expressed sympathy and admiration for the Russian people.

51. V.V. Giri on the Dangers of Pakistan

The Times of India, 6 July 1942.

Pakistan was dangerous economically, and disastrous politically, observed Mr. V.V. Giri, President of the All-India Trade Union Congress, speaking at a meeting in Matunga, Bombay, on Sunday.

Referring to the attitude of labour in regard to the present situation, Mr. Giri said the Trade Union Congress represented all shades of political opinion, and individual members were given freedom of thought and action. The workers were against Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism.

Mr. Giri criticized Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's move. The minorities question had to be solved, but if they had no alternative to Mr. Rajagopalachari's scheme, they would have to wait and organize the people. Then the alternative would come of itself. To satisfy the minorities the speaker was even prepared to hand over all posts to the minorities for a period of five to ten years.

Concluding, Mr. Giri said: 'Every inch of the country belongs to us. Mr. Jinnah ought to feel proud that the whole of India is his and not part of India.'

52. Jawaharlal Nehru on the Lifting of the Ban on the Communist Party:
Interview to the Press, Allahabad, *Hindustan Times*, 24 July 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 615, 26 July 1942.

Q: What is your reaction to the decision of the Government of India to lift the ban on the Communist Party of India?

JN: I am glad that the ban on the Communist Party has been lifted because I disapprove of all such bans but there is too much of a quid pro quo and a bargain about this matter. I do not, of course, agree with the present policy of the Communist Party. But I think it has been the height of absurdity and impropriety for the ban on the Communist Party to have continued for so many years in India. It is not by attempts at forcible suppression that the flow of ideas can be stopped, and the government ought to have realized this by this time. But the Government of India is not capable of realizing anything, new or led, outside its old ruts.

53. P.C. Joshi's Open Letter to the Working Committee from the
Communist Party, 26 July 1942
People's War, 26 July 1942, p. 1.

Dear Comrades,

It is the gravest hour in the life of our ancient nation. An alien imperialist bureaucracy keeps our great people chained and goes as the Government of the land. Our country is threatened with foreign invasion, both from the East and the West. To-day the heroic resistance of the Chinese people in the East, the epic resistance of the Soviet people in the West is holding the Fascist invaders at bay. This is how when these two peoples are fighting to defend their own homelands, they are saving our land too. Tomorrow, any day, and in the very near future, we too will have to perform our own patriotic duty.

You are the respected leadership of our proud national movement, represented by the great Congress, which has been built up with the blood of our martyrs, which is supported by countless millions of our people. Yours is the serious responsibility to guide our 50 years' old movement for freedom. We Communists are 15 years old, born in the womb of the same broad national movement and we have endeavoured our very best to strengthen it. All of us proudly carry our Congress membership card, as a treasured possession of our national heritage, as a living inspiration to fight the battle of India's freedom, shoulder to shoulder with our fellow patriots.

In the present national emergency you have given a lead to the country. We consider it our duty to speak our mind to you. We think you have a right to be heard by you and all our fellow fighters for freedom.

Before you gave the nation your present lead, the national leadership among themselves were sharply divided, which is no more a secret to any patriot. The most revered leader, Gandhiji, himself suffered from the illusion that the Japs may not come to India, that an honourable peace with the Japs may be possible. His faithful lieutenant damned all talk of national resistance as moonshine and argued that it was too late to talk of defending the country and fighting for National Government. We re glad, as all thinking patriots are, that this suicidal policy has been respected by the persuasion of Pandit Nehru, Maulana Azad and others.

We rejoice that the defeatists inside the National leadership have been defeated and you have unanimously come to the conclusions that—

INDIA MUST DEFEND HERSELF
INDIA MUST RESIST FASCIST AGGRESSION
INDIA MUST LINE UP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS
INDIA MUST HAVE POWER TO ORGANISE HER DEFENCE
INDIA MUST BE FREE TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

We, however, deplore the practical lead you have given.... Is it not plain enough that to start your 'struggle' is just to play the game of the imperialists and the bureaucrats? What will happen if and when you start the struggle?

They will quietly put you and thousands of active Congress workers inside jails and sanctimoniously declare that it is their unfortunate duty to be able to save India from the Fascist invaders. They would have divorced you from contact with the people who need you and every patriot in their own midst more than ever before.... You would leave the defence of our nation in the hands of a mercenary army and a foreign Government....

The battle for India's freedom has to be fought and fought by us; and more, it has to be fought to-day within a broader, a world-wide framework, alongside the peoples of the world.... You are the leadership of the nation. You can't afford to take a single false step which will spell disaster for our people and lead to the death and destruction of our nation under Fascism....

The sort of struggle Gandhiji is visualizing and in which the rest of you have acquiesced is not a plan of struggle but a gamble, it is not fighting for freedom but escape into jails, it is not leading the people but forsaking them, it does not liquidate the imperialist bureaucracy but makes us live under it now to be passed on as chattel to their successors, the Jap Fascists. Such a 'struggle' will not get us Freedom but Fascism.

Prepare the country to fight the Fascist invaders to the death. That will be fighting for freedom, because such is the only path to our freedom.

Go out to unite the nation. The day you forge Congress-League unity, National Government comes and the bureaucrats go.

India will emerge free in a free world.

INQUILAB ZINDABAD!

P.C. Joshi

General Secretary,
Communist Party of India

54. Communists Explain Why They Walked Out of the BPCC Meeting
The Bombay Chronicle, 29 July 1942.

Messrs. P.K. Karane and N.L. Upadhyaya, the Communist members of the B.P.C.C. have issued the following statement:

We were surprised to find Mr. Patil suddenly bringing forward a lengthy resolution on the political situation for the Committee's acceptance. We demanded that as no sufficient notice was given of the resolution, its consideration be adjourned for the time being in order to give time to the members to study it and move amendments, if any, before voting upon it.

Being serious political workers, we were anxious that a resolution of such a kind should be thoroughly discussed by the members of the Committee after sufficient consideration.

We tried our best to bring home to Mr. Patil our point of view. But, most unfortunately, Mr. Patil would have none of it.

In the circumstances, we would have been failing in our duty to ourselves as well as to the country which we dearly love, had we in any way associated ourselves with the proceedings of the meeting and, we most reluctantly left it.

Chapter 6. Kisan Sabha and the Congress Socialist Party

A. KISAN SABHA

1. Frontier Kisan Leader Jailed

Advance, 31 January 1942.

Rawalpindi

Mr. Umar Faruq, Vice-President of the Frontier Provincial Kisan Sabha and member of the Working Committee of the All-India Kisan Sabha, who was standing his trial on a charge of delivering an objectionable speech was convicted under the Defence of India Rules to-day by the Additional District Magistrate who sentenced him to one year's rigorous imprisonment on two separate counts and a fine of Rs.100. The sentences will run concurrently.

2. All India Kisan Sabha: Resolutions Passed at Executive Committee Meeting at Patna

Advance, 13 February 1942.

Nagpur, Feb. 13

A resolution urging upon the Kisans to align themselves on the side of Russia, China and other progressive forces in waging a relentless war for the final extermination of Fascism was passed by the Executive Committee of the All-India Kisan Sabha to-day.

The resolution proceeds: This war can be effectively converted into the Indian peoples war only when it is fought under the leadership of a National Government and with the willing and happy cooperation of the people of India. The council, however, feels that under the present circumstances the manpower and resources of India cannot be effectively mobilized for the successful prosecution of the war.

Continuing the resolution says: 'With a view to converting the present war into the Indian peoples war, the Council urges the Government to take the following measures:

- (1) Declare in an unequivocal language India's right to freedom and frame its constitution after the war
- (2) Establish immediately a National Government at the Centre responsible to the people
- (3) Establish popular Ministries in the provinces
- (4) Release all political prisoners

- (5) Assure civil liberties to the peoples
- (6) Rapid industrialisation and raising of peoples standard of living.
- (7) Organising of a people's army
- (8) Withdraw coercive and oppressive orders and ordinances.
- (9) Reduce burdens of inequitable rents and taxes on the Kisans and
- (10) Grant dearness allowance to workers

The Council decided to hold its general session in Bihar in the last week of May or the first week of June.

3. Sheel Bhadra Yajee's Political Activities in 1942¹

GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

In February 1942, as a protest against the Kisan Council's resolution supporting war against the Axis, he resigned from the office of Joint Secretaryship of the All-India Kisan Sabha. A report received about this time mentioned that he has been secretly entrusted with the task of organizing underground work, on behalf of the Forward Bloc, within the Bihar Kisan Sabha. At a special meeting of the Forward Bloc workers held in Delhi that month he advised the key leaders to go underground as he anticipated that Forward Bloc would shortly be declared an illegal organization; in urging workers, peasants and youths to join the National Defence Brigade, he claimed that in Bihar the Forward Bloc was enrolling double the police strength in every district and hinted significantly that the Defence Brigade had other secret plans which would be disclosed only at the proper time; he was for exploiting the present situation created by the war to the full advantage. On 19.3.42 he opened the Benares Dist. Forward Bloc Conference over which Ruikar presided. His absence from an important Provincial Forward Bloc meeting held at Patna on 2.4.42 led to the strong suspicion that he might have gone underground; he has been untraced since before the meeting. A statement dated 23.4.42 bearing his name has however since been seen; it makes the fantastic claim that the Forward Bloc is powerful and popular and that its workers are in the forefront of the national struggle for independence. The Statement was issued by way of rejoinder to Nehru's allegation that the Forward Bloc was not heard of outside Bengal.

¹ Sheel Bhadra Yajee was an M.L.A. from Bihar. He was also Vice-President, All-India Forward Bloc Working Committee and Joint Secretary, All-India Kisan Sangh. His interest in Kisan Sabha work dated back to 1935.

4. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of April 1942 about the Sahajanand Group's Provincial Kisan Sabha Conference at Shergatty, Gaya

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Kisan Sabha—The conference of the Sahajanand group of the Provincial Kisan Sabha which was held at Sherghatty in the Gaya District on the 4th and 5th April, was attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd of about 5,000. On his way to Sherghatty, Swami Sahajanand was greeted by a black flag demonstration organized by a local Forward Block enthusiast of Gaya. This resulted in a minor clash and several arrests had to be made. A party of socialists

had come to Sherghatty with the object of creating a disturbance during the conference, but their numbers were small, so that they were able to do little except interrupt the proceedings occasionally. The Swami declared that he had no wish to dissipate Kisan energy in fights over bakasht land, but wished them to concentrate their attention on helping Russia and China to defeat the Fascist powers so that a Kisan-mazdoor Raj might eventually be established. Help to Russia, said he, implied help to Britain which was necessary not through love of the British, but in order to save the country from Fascism, a greater peril than British Imperialism. To this end he advised the audience to form panchayats and organize volunteers. Professor Ranga spoke on somewhat similar lines....

Forward Bloc—The working committee of the Provincial Forward Bloc held a meeting at Patna on the 2nd April at which the Nagpur war resolution of the All India Kisan Council was condemned and the Cripps proposals declared unsatisfactory. Sheel Bhadra Yajee was elected president. Forward Bloc activity has continued in Santal Parganas inspite of the externment of Lambodar Mukherji and Sarbanand Misra.

5. Extract from Presidential Address of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati at the Ninth Session of the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha at Sherghati, Gaya, 4 and 5 April 1942

Printed Pamphlet Containing the Presidential Address.

.... Imperialism and Fascism are twin brothers. And as such they may arrive at some settlement some day among themselves. But, how can we, who have abhorred and fought Imperialism with all our life, afford to choose for ourselves Fascism, the most brutal and barbaric form of Imperialism? In the present state of affairs it will be simply suicidal to give Hitler and Tojo a free hand in over-running Russia, China and even Great Britain. Unfortunately or fortunately things have come to a pass where if Russia and China are victorious, Britain too is bound to share the laurels of that victory. We cannot help it. There is no such royal road by treading upon which we can secure the victory of Russia and China and at the same time see the defeat and destruction of British Government in India to be replaced by our own and not by that of Hitler or Tojo. If there is any man to show such a line we will gladly take it and follow him. But till that way is not available, we are constrained to follow our own....

Some people raise the question of conditional and unconditional support to the war. The Nagpur resolution of the C.K.C. admits of none. Conditional support implies bargaining, while unconditional support betrays the bad odour of surrender. The Kisan Sabha detests both bargaining and surrender. Once the Congress too, had taken a similar non-committal attitude as regards the Communal Award of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. It was one of 'neither support nor opposition' to it. And when the Kisan Sabha extends its support to Soviet Russia and China alone, the bogey of conditional or unconditional support should not and cannot be raised at all....

United National Front

I maintain, it is impossible to defeat Hitler and Tojo unless the people throughout the land throw themselves heart and soul into this colossal task. In China, Chiang-Kai-Shek bourgeois party was helpless and one after another, many provinces of China were devoured by Japan. And the Communist Party too, which had so successfully fought Chiang-Kai-Shek could

not defeat the Japanese fascists single-handed. Consequently both Chiang-Kai-Shek and the Communists formed a United Front and since then they have been heroically resisting the Japanese hordes to the utter amazement of the whole world. I submit that the conditions in India to-day are the same and China should serve as a beacon light to us. We should spare no efforts to create without further delay a United National Front of our own people here and now and therefore the C.K.C. at Nagpur laid particular stress on the need of the broadest unity among different groups, big and small, of the country. I with the Indian National Congress, as the greatest political organization of the land, should come forward and reach an agreement with the Muslim League, so that in co-operation with the Muslim League and other organizations, with one thought and one voice, National Governments may be formed at the centre and in the provinces. To-day, the British Government is itself facing perilous times and the pressure of the British people themselves as also of Russia and China, is forcing it to come to some settlement with the Indian people. Because without India's co-operation, Britain, Russia and China cannot face the danger squarely....

6. Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of April 1942 on Swami Sahajanand's Anti-Japanese Stand and on Recruitment to the Army

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Kisan Sabha—A Kisan Sabha meeting was held at Majhiawan, P.S. Kurthe, district Gaya, on the 12th April 1942 at which the chief speakers were Swami Sahajanand, Mathura Prasad Misra and Jadunandan Sharma. The Swami assured the audience that the Japanese were but brutal people against whom Kisans must fight for their own protection. He said that he was not averse to recruitment in the army, provided the Kisans were properly treated and well-paid. He ended his speech with an appeal for the formation of village defence parties and for subscriptions to help the Russian War effort.... A largely attended meeting was held by the Sahajanand group at Shakra in the Muzaffarpur District where Swami Sahajanand warned the audience against the idea that the Japanese wished them well and asked Indians not to be traitors to their country and assist the enemy like the Malaysians and Burmese.

7. Preparations for AIKS Sessions; Tension with Forward Bloc: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Both sections of the Kisan Sabha have been making strenuous preparations for the All India Kisan Sabha conferences of their respective groups. Both are to be held in the last week of May, that of the Socialist group in Muzaffarpur and that of Swami Sahajanand in Bihta in the Patna district. Some 40 Forward Bloc supporters of the Socialist group, headed by Dhanraj Puri appeared at Bihta on the 7th May, announcing that they had been elected as delegates to the conference and wished to elect a president. They were turned out by the Swami and his followers then held a meeting at which they elected Professor Ranga as president. Later, they approached the Swami again and entered into an argument with him about his war support policy which ended in mutual abuse. In his addresses at public meetings while the Swami makes his general attacks on Government, zamindars and capitalists as usual, he is asking them for a

demonstration of wholehearted determination to withstand the threatened Japanese invasion and to unite with the world's progressive forces in opposing the evils of Fascism.

8. Widening of Rift within Kisan Sabha: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The outstanding event of the fortnight was the widening of the rift between the two sections of the Kisan Sabhaites which resulted in the conference of the Socialist and Forward Bloc groups among the Kisans, proposed to be held at Bedaul in the district of Muzaffarpur, being postponed. It is reported that Acharya Narendradoe will preside over this meeting. In the meantime Ram Briksh Benipuri has been sent to jail and Dhanraj Puri has had a notice issued to him suspending him from the Kisan Sabha and calling upon him to show cause against expulsion. The All India Kisan Conference fixed for the 30th May at Bihta under the auspices of the Sahajanand Group is reported to have come off notwithstanding an attempt to create a disturbance by some members of the Socialist and Forward Bloc groups. Indulal Yagnik presided and the resolutions passed welcomed the attempt made by the Friends of the Soviet Union to send a goodwill mission to Russia and China, and ratified the Nagpur resolution of the Central Kisan council supporting the war against the Axis and demanding a national government. In his speech the president declared that there is no longer any question of helping 'Britain's War', as it has now become the bounden duty of every Indian to defend the motherland against the Japanese aggression and accept all possible help from England, America and China. He added 'We are not unmindful of Britain's past misdeeds and niggardliness to India, but these should not be allowed to cloud our Indian freedom in the context of world conditions'.

Mr. Yagnik asserted that for a total war to be fought on a national scale, a national Government was absolutely essential and he characterized Mr. Rajagopalachariar's move as a bold remedy to forge national unity and establish a national Government in the country. He criticized the principle of 'non-violent non-cooperation' of the Congress and said that the suggestion that the British and allied forces should be withdrawn from India at the present moment would result in country-wide anarchy.

9. Acharya Narendra Dev's Presidential Address at All India Kisan Conference at Bedaul, Muzaffarpur, 6 June 1942¹

The National Herald, 7 June 1942, Reproduced in Hari Dev Sharma (ed.), *Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva* (hereafter *SWAND*), Vol. 2, pp. 27-8.

'The world will live in peace and tranquility only when both fascism and imperialism are destroyed. Economic security and freedom are essential preconditions for such world peace which can be delivered only by a socialist scheme of things....'

Acharya Narendra Deva analysed the causes of the war and observed that it broke out as the result of inherent conflict between 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

He sought to refute the arguments advanced by the communists and others that this was a people's war fought for the sake of preserving world democracy and asked, 'If it was so, why should not Britain accede to India's national demand for independence?' He criticized the communists who changed their line of action in December last when they sought to justify their

co-operation in war effort on the plea that the character of the war had changed on account of Hitler's attack on Soviet Russia.

While admitting that an imperialist war could transform itself into a people's war, Acharya Narendra Deva observed that nothing had happened since the declaration of war against the Axis, which would admit of its connection to the Atlantic Charter. 'The principle of self-determination has been acceded in the Atlantic Charter only to those nations which have gone down to Hitlerism. It has not been made applicable to the British possessions. Why will then people believe that this is a people's war?'

Dwelling on Hitler's new order and Japanese co-prosperity programme, Acharya Narendra Deva said, 'Nazism and fascism are a symptom. Their ambition is to dominate human freedom.'

'They have no consideration for human personality. They do not believe in any social qualities of spiritual values. Though Germany has been able to solve her unemployment, she has done so at the cost of standard of living of the masses which has gone down greatly under Hitler.'

Coming to the co-prosperity programme of Japan, Acharya Narendra Deva said, 'Japan felt the growing national consciousness among the subjugated people of the East and knew at once that she could not dominate them just in the western fashion. And so Japan has invented the sham slogan of co-prosperity sphere. In effect, Japan wants to rule over all the countries lying in the Pacific belt.'

Discussing the position of India in this world conflict, Acharya Narendra Deva said that it would cease to be an imperialist war for her if she could feel free and obtain a charter of freedom for her millions of Kisans and labourers.

Acharya Narendra Deva dwelt on the many problems which had cropped up before the Kisans as a result of the war and said that these problems would have to be tackled somehow or other in the given situation. He advised intensification of the 'grow more food campaign' and co-operative spirit among the Kisans. He advised and asked the Kisans to follow the Congress programme of self-defence and self-sufficiency and to cultivate the spirit of non-violent resistance against any aggressor. He pleaded for the greatest amount of national unity in a critical time like this when not only the communists but even Mr. Rajagopalachari was spreading discord in the Congress. He urged the Kisans to give strength to the Indian National Congress.

¹ Acharya Narendra Deva was unable to attend the conference due to poor health. His address was read out by Chandra Bhushan Shukla. Damodar Swarup Seth presided over the conference in the absence of Acharya Narendra Deva.

10. Swami Sahajanand Saraswati Addresses Workers' Meeting in Bombay, 6 June 1942: Extract from the Intelligence Summary for the Week Ending 6 June 1942

Home Department Special Branch File No. 800 (53) BC-III, MSA.

Swami Sahajanand arrived in Bombay on June 5th on his way to preside over the Gujarat Provincial Kisan Sabha at Bulsar.

He was to speak to the students at the office of the Bombay Students' Union at Gamdevi but could not do so as the train arrived several hours late.

He addressed a public meeting of workers at DeLisle Road the same evening under the auspices of the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union (Red Flag), Bombay Presidency Students' Federation and several other trade unions. About 1000 persons attended. N.M. Joshi presided.

After he was introduced to the audience by the President, Swami Sahajanand said that the fight between Capital and Labour was a long standing one and that the present war would put down Imperialism once for all. He criticized the present policy of the Congress and its leaders who, while wanting the Britishers to leave India, had not stated as to what kind of Government they were going to have in place of the British Government. He added that if the Congress did not succeed in driving the Britishers out of their country during the last 50 years with non-violence, it would not be possible for it to meet Japanese aggression by non-violent non-cooperation. Although the British Government exploited them in every way, it had at least not destroyed their hearths and homes. If Japan succeeded in occupying their country there would be brutal rule of the Fascists. It was therefore necessary for all parties in the country to help the British in destroying Fascism. If Fascism was destroyed Imperialism would disappear automatically. He criticized the Government for not releasing the detenus who had declared their anti-Fascist policy. In conclusion he appealed to the various political parties to unite in their demand for national government as the British Government would not be able to oppose such a united demand.

The meeting passed resolutions (1) expressing anxiety for the serious illness of S.A. Dange and (2) demanding the release of all Communist Party leaders and the removal of the ban on the Communist Party of India.

P.C. Joshi, whose arrest warrant was recently withdrawn by Government, was present. He went away with Swami Sahajanand in a taxi.

Swami Sahajanand left for Bulsar by the Kathiawar Express on June 6th.

11. Report of the Proceedings of the Second Sitting of the 3rd Gujarat Provincial Kisan Conference, 7 June 1942, Prepared by PSI CID, Ahmedabad, for the District Superintendent of Police, Surat

Home Department Special Branch File No. 800 (53) BC-III, MSA.

.... President: Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

Speakers:

1. Indulal K. Yagnik
2. Thakerbhai Kahandas Patel
3. D.M. Pangarkar
4. Chandrabhai Kalidas Bhatt
5. Jekisandas J. Panwala
6. Pitamber Maganlal Gor
7. Nanubhai Pragibhai Desai
8. Narsi Aka
9. Ramchandra Kawahik
10. Zinagar Arya

Attendance: About 1000 persons including about 250 women, 100 children and 150 peasants.

.... Nanubhai Pragjibhai Desai then moved resolution number 3 regarding the miseries and hardships of Raniparaj peasants and stated that as Raniparaj peasants were ignorant and illiterate, they were exploited in many ways by the land-lords and Sahukars. Even though they were working very hard, they had to face starvation and were always at the mercy of the Sahukars. It was, therefore, necessary that the miserable lot of the Raniparaj should be improved by guiding them on a proper path.

Thakerbhai Kahandas Patel in supporting resolution number 3 addressed the conference and gave a vivid and a pathetic picture of the hardships, poverty and miseries of Raniparaj and other peasants of Pardi Taluka. He also described the methods and tactics which were being adopted by the land-lords and Sahukars for exploiting and harassing the down trodden peasants. The speaker appealed to the Sahukars and land-lords to stop exploiting the poor peasants.

Continuing he stated that the Land Revenue Code was also the root cause of all evils and hence it was the aim of the Kisan Sabha to get the present Land Revenue Code replaced by some other suitable Law in order that the peasants might reap the fruits of their labour and live in a happy manner. Proceeding further, he stated that it was the foremost duty of the Government to solve the problem of poverty and starvation existing amongst the peasants and requested the Government for taking immediate measures for granting relief to the peasants. He also sounded a note of warning that no one should ignore the problem of the peasants and it was the bounden duty of the Government to see that those who produce crop by the sweat of their brows at least get sufficient food and other amenities of life. Finally the speaker stated that the Kisan Sabha would continue its struggle till it succeeded in achieving economic and political salvation for the peasants.

Narsi Aka formally supported the resolution.

Indulal K. Yagnik also supported the resolution and dwelt at length upon the miserable and pitiable plight of the peasants. He reiterated the views of the former speaker.

The resolution was then put to votes and passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 4 was moved by Pitamber Maganlal Gor of Kaira District. In moving the resolution, he made a short speech and narrated the miserable condition of the peasants who were hard-pressed on account of abnormal increase in the prices of all commodities. He requested the Government to grant Tagavi to the peasants, to stop recovery of old debts and to open relief works for the peasants.

Ramchandra Kawshik and Zinagar Arya simply supported the resolution which was put to votes and passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 5 regarding the War and present situation was moved by D.M. Pangarkar. In moving the resolution, he narrated the causes which led to the out-break of the Second World War. Continuing he stated that no doubt in the beginning the war was an imperialist one and Kisan Sabha was not in favour of assisting the war efforts at that time. The Government was also aware of the policy of the Kisan Sabha and took severe measures against the Kisan and labour leaders by arresting some of them under the Defence of India Rules and by gagging those who were out of jail. Since the treacherous attack by Hitler on Russia, the war assumed a different character and it became a people's war.

.... The speaker exhorted the audience to assist the war efforts by mobilizing all resources and manpower in India. He stated that the assisting of the war efforts did not mean that the

Kisan Sabha had effected a compromise with the British Government and preferred British domination. Under the present critical times, the first and foremost task was to defeat a formidable Foe and if they succeeded in defeating the Fascist forces, there was no power on earth which would keep them in bondage any longer. In the opinion of the speaker, the present time was the most opportune one for India to achieve strength and unity. Lastly he criticized the creed of non-violent Non-co-operation of Mr. Gandhi and stated that to follow that policy indirectly meant helping the enemies. The speaker exhorted the audience to cultivate the spirit of resistance even though they were without arms. In support of his contention, he quoted the instance of the Chinese people who though ill-equipped and unarmed were offering stubborn resistance to Japanese forces. He advised the audience to join the army, to learn art of guerilla warfare and be prepared for all eventualities. Finally he appealed to the audience to move in the villages for creating class consciousness amongst the masses.

Chandrabhai Bhatt in support of the above resolution made a short speech and reiterated the views of the former speaker....

The resolution was then put to vote and passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 6 on Repressive policy was moved by Jaikishan Panwala. In moving the resolution, the speaker appealed to the Government to release the Kisan labour and other political prisoners and the detainees who were anxious to assist the war efforts and whose presence would create a healthy atmosphere for resisting the Japanese invasion. Lastly he requested the Government to create confidence in the masses by relaxing the repressive measures.

Resolution No. 7 on the Debt Relief and Tenancy Acts was moved by Indulal K. Yagnik, while moving the resolution he addressed the meeting and dwelt at length upon the tyranny and oppression of the landlords and Sahukars especially of Pardi Taluka. He strongly advised the peasants to take full advantage of the Tenancy and Debt Relief Acts and asked them not to tolerate insults and abuses of the Sahukars. Continuing he stated that the panacea for ending all evils and hardships of the peasants was to unite and organize them. The speaker expressed his surprise as to why the Backward class officer was not taking any steps for bettering the condition of the backward and illiterate peasants.

.... The resolution was supported by Pitamber Ger and was passed unanimously.

.... Swami Sahajanand in winding up the proceedings of the conference made a short speech in Hindi and asked the audience to pay their full attention to the resolutions passed at the conference especially as they will have to do their best to improve the condition of the Dublas.

He said that they were unanimous in fighting the Fascism and for that purpose they should organize defence committees and protect their hearths and homes. He also wished that a national Government should be established in India with a view to offer successful resistance to the Japanese aggression.

One advantage in holding the conference at Bulsar was that the town people would also understand the difficulties of the Kisans. He advised town people to help the Kisans in any way they liked by writing books and by publishing news papers....

EFFECT: Even though the conference was held mainly for the peasants, their attendance was very meager on both the days. The Conference cannot be said to be a success so far as the peasants were concerned. Thakorbbhai and other Kisan workers tried their level best to attract large attendance of the peasants by holding propaganda meetings at various villages but the response was poor.

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati delivered his presidential speech in a very logical and convincing manner with the result that the speech created good impression upon the audience so far as stimulating the war efforts and resisting the Japanese invasion were concerned.

12. Restrictions on Holding of Kishan Conference: Letter from Secretary, Rangpur District Krishan Samity, to the Home Member, Government of India, Early June 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 177/1942, NAI.

Dear Sir,

I have to bring to your notice the following for your consideration.

We propose to hold the Bengal Provincial Kishan Conference at Domar, Dist. Rangpur (Bengal) on the 27th and 28th June, 1942. It has been openly stated that the principal object of the said Conference would be to discuss our present problem and devise effective means of evolving a workable programme for our organization strictly along the line of the Nagpur Resolution ratified in the All India Kishan Conference held in Bihta. Is it not striking that in spite of our having openly associated ourselves with all sorts of anti-fascist and anti-Japanese activities our district authorities should consider it fit to come forward with orders having obstructionist effect on the said activities of ours.... With respect to Memo No. 1234-C dated 11th June, 1942, which concerns the holding of our anti-fascist anti-Japanese meetings in the Villages of the district, I may write for your information that formerly we received orders Memo. No. 1091 C dated 2nd June 1942 that we were at liberty to hold any number of meetings provided we equipped ourselves with permission from the District authorities seven days in advance of such a meeting and we were holding meetings with full consent of the authorities. We feel that these meetings would always have the desired effect on the audience and it is of absolute importance, if the anti-Japanese feeling has to be developed that such meetings should be organized much more frequently. So, I confess frankly, we are utterly bewildered at having been served with a notice which instead of giving facility to the holding of such meetings is definitely obstructing them. What sense, I ask you to judge, can there be in restricting these meetings which are the only effective means of appealing to the masses?

The second order Memo. No. 1941-C dated 10th June 1942 concerns the Conference which has been referred to at the beginning. I beg to be excused when I repeat that this Conference owes its allegiance in unequivocal terms to the 'Shahajanand Group' of the Kishan Sabha. Yet, as you will find in the notice, we have been asked to submit ourselves to conditions, some of which if followed will certainly destroy the object of the Conference. This, I like to emphasise, is no party meeting organised for any particular locality. This is an open Conference where people, anti-fascist people be it—noted, from the entire province, may from possibly the whole of India, are expected to attend and exhort the audience to organize themselves, so that in time of the dire distress (may it not come at all) they may behave themselves properly and face the disorder and confusion as also the enemy with organized determination. That being accepted what idea can there be in asking us to do the absurd task of submitting the names and other particulars of the speakers of such a Conference?

Then again we have been asked not to hold drill, processions and other demonstrations. The conference is being held in a rural area with the sole object ... the masses about the seriousness

of the situation. We feel that if we are to proceed with the Conference ... ban on drill and other demonstrations, we shall unduly frustrate the cause of the Conference....

I hope you will consider these points and ... we are permitted to hold the Conference without any of the bans referred to. In view of the urgency of the situation your immediate intervention in the matter is earnestly solicited.

Yours truly,

Mani Mohan Majumdar

Secretary,

Rangpur District Krishak Samity

13. The Bengal Provincial Krishak Conference: Extract from Daily Report on the Situation in Calcutta, Dated 6 July 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 177/42, NAI.

The Bengal Provincial Krishak Conference was held on 28th and 29th June under the presidentship of Bankim Mukharji (C.P.I.). A number of other prominent C.P.I. leaders such as Gopen Chakravartty, Gopal Halder and Bharani Goswami were also present. The general tone of the proceedings was anti-Government and the usual remark to the effect that they were supporting the war with the object of destroying Imperialism was made. If after the defeat of the Fascist powers British Imperialism still survived, they would have to renew their fierce fight against it. The convicts in the Chittagong Armoury Raid Case were eulogized and their release demanded. Combined with the expression of their intention to resist the Japanese was the inevitable remark that for the offering of effective resistance it was necessary that they should have a national government in India.

Two leaflets in Bengali issued by the communists have appeared in Cachar district. One was entitled 'Be Prepared to save your Life from the Japanese Robbers' and the other was entitled 'Unite to resist the Japanese Goondas'. The Deputy commissioner of the district has proscribed both leaflets on the grounds that they suggest an imminent invasion of Assam; misrepresent facts and create imaginary fears; suggest that Government is unable to protect the labourers, and induce defeatist mentality and are an attempt to foment labour unrest.

14. About Indulal Yagnik Wanting to Start a Gujarati Paper Supporting War Effort

File No. 800 (53) BC-III, Home Department Special Branch, MSA.

In his letter dated 21-6-42, addressed to the Hon'ble the Commerce Member of the Govt. of India, Mr. Indulal Yagnik, President of the All India Kisan Sabha, has stated that he wishes to start a Gujarati daily called 'Gujarat' for the propagation of 'All help to United Nations in the present war'. He has further stated that almost all papers in Gujarati support the Congress view and it is therefore absolutely necessary to have an organ of their own (presumably of the Kisan Sabha) to support the war. He hopes to sell about 15 to 18 thousand copies of the proposed paper every day and has therefore requested that a quota licence for 100 tons of newsprint for six months may be issued....

3. It would appear that Mr. Yagnik will, in his proposed daily, try to give expression to his pro-war and anti-fascist views, but it is doubtful whether the paper will get a wide circulation in Gujarat which is still a stronghold of the Congress and where Mr. Yagnik has a very small following. The statement made in para 2 of his letter dated 21-6-42 appears to be correct, as the majority of the Gujarati papers are pro-Congress, and in view of Mr. Yagnik's pro-war and anti-fascist views it appears that his proposed daily may do some good. We may therefore inform the C.C. of I. that the statement made by Mr. Yagnik in para 2 of his letter is substantially correct and that his request for allotting a quota of newsprint may be favourably considered. The C.C. of I. may at the same time be informed that this Govt. is unable to say whether Mr. Yagnik will require so much as 100 tons of newsprint every six months.

15. Extract from the Bombay Province Weekly Letter No. 27 about
Anti-profiteering Day, 11 July 1942

Home Department Special Branch File No. 800 (53) BC-III, MSA.

Indulal K. Yagnik and Swami Sahajanand, President and Secretary respectively of the All-India Kisan Sabha have issued a Press appeal asking all Kisans and Sabha workers to join in a crusade against profiteering and to observe throughout India July 26th as 'Anti-Profiteering Day'. The Gujarat Provincial Kisan Sabha has distributed leaflets on the subject of profiteering. Among other things it is suggested that Government should fix the price of Bavata, Kodara and Banti grain and that license holders should be compelled to exhibit their prices. Government should take other measures to control prices. They should also appoint special officers for this purpose, open cheap grain shops and more effectively control exports and imports. The Kisans are advised to hold meetings and organize marches. They should also co-operate with Government officials in order to check profiteering.

16. Indulal Yagnik's Telegram to *Daily Herald*

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 July 1942.

Mr. Indulal Yagnik, the President of the all India Kisan Sahba has sent the following telegram to the '*Daily Herald*', London.

'Your saber rattling and sermonizing attitude towards the stand taken by the Indian National Congress as expressed in its latest resolution has been received with resentment and pain by the Indian people. The main responsibility of not winning the whole-hearted co-operation of the Indian people against Fascist aggression rests entirely with the irresponsible Indian bureaucracy and the British Tories who raised every obstacle in the way of a settlement between the Indian people and the British Government. With a colonial brand of autocracy which had Malaya and Burma in the saddle in India, the Indian people cannot admit the possibility of waging a successful war in the Indian theatre. I, therefore, earnestly appeal to you and all other sympathizers in the Allied Nations with the cause of Indian Freedom which is an integral part of World Freedom, to bring every pressure on the British Government to compel it to settle the differences with the Indian people and hand over to representative Indian leaders the conduct of India's Government. It is only such an enlightened statesmanship and diplomacy that can harness the energies of the Indian people for encompassing the defeat of Fascism which you as well as ourselves so passionately desire.'

17. Confidential Report of Meeting of District Kisan Sabha and Surat Mill Kamdar Union, 2 August 1942

Home Department Special Branch File No. 800 (53) BC-III, MSA.

Respected Sir,

I respectfully beg to report that a public meeting under the joint auspices of the Surat District Kisan Sabha and Surat Mill Kamdar Union was held on 1/8/42. The details are as under:

Date & Time: 1/8/42; from 10–15 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Place: Nawapura Golward, Pipardi Sheri, Surat.

Attendance: About 100 persons.

President: Nanubhai Pragji Desai, Surat.

Other speakers:

1. H.M. Kazi, Surat.
2. J.J. Panwala, Surat.
3. Thakordas Kahandas Patel, Bulsar.
4. Jashwant Dansinh Chauhan, Surat.

Subject: Observance of Anti-Profiteering Week.

Summary:

Speakers No. 1, 2 and 4 as usual explained the object of observing the week and referred to the present growing dear ness and profiteering. They described the pitiful condition of the poor workers and the Kisans who do not get a daily food for their life. They urged the people to request the Government to make proper arrangements for the foodstuff of the poor and further appealed to the people to participate in the meeting and the procession in the Castle Maidan on 2/8/42.

Thakordas Kahandas Patel addressing the meeting reiterated the above speech and in addition said that:

‘I notice the people of Sagrampura enjoying luxuries but when I cast my eyes on Golwad I find the pitiful condition of the poverty of the different families there. He then referred to the increasing dearness and widespread profiteering prevailing at present, and remarked that the menacing situation could be improved by introducing the ration system in India like in England. He appealed to the people to urge the Government to introduce the ration system as early as possible. Finally he appealed to the people to participate in the meeting and procession on the 2nd August 1942 at the Castle Maidan, Surat.

Effect: Ordinary

18. Central Kisan Council to Meet on 22 August

The Times of India, 3 August 1942.

Mr. Indulal Yagnik, President of the All India Kisan Sabha, has convened a meeting of the Central Kisan Council, to be held in Bombay on August 22 to consider the general situation that might be created by the resolution of the All India Congress Committee and other bodies as well as the political and economic policy pursued by the Central and provincial Governments.

B. THE CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

19. Arrest of Yusuf Meherally in Lahore

The Tribune, 3 January 1942.

Lahore

Mr. Yusuf Meherally, General Secretary of the All India Congress Socialist Party, who was arrested last night for defying the externment order of the Punjab Government was produced today at about 4 p.m. before Sardar Iqbal Singh, Duty Magistrate, who remanded him to judicial lock-up until 10th January. He will be kept in the Lahore Central Jail and will be treated as a better class prisoner.

He will be tried under the Defence of India Rules by a local magistrate on the 10th of January for alleged defiance of an externment order.

20. Protest against Mr. Meherally's Arrest: Punjab Congress Socialist Party Passes Resolutions

The Tribune, 7 January 1942.

Ludhiana, Jan. 5

The general meeting of the Punjab Congress Socialist Party was held here yesterday at the office of the local Congress Socialist Party. Comrade Charan Singh Kharbanda, Vice President of the Punjab Motor Union, presided. The meeting was attended by almost all the Party members who are out of jail. The deliberations continued for three hours 'in camera'. Five resolutions were released to the press after the conclusion of the meeting.

The first resolution protested against the action of the Punjab Government in arresting comrade Yusuf Meherally and congratulated him on his arrest.

The second resolution reiterated the attitude of the Party towards the present war and stated that the previous resolution of the Party in this regard still held the field irrespective of the Bardoli resolution of the Congress Working Committee.

In the third resolution the Punjab Congress Socialist Party wanted to secure the release of the detenus at present confined to the Deoli Camp and also to start agitation for the redress of the grievances of 'C' class prisoners.

By the fourth resolution the party appointed Divisional Inspectors in order to carry out the organizational work of the Party.

By the fifth resolution the Party decided to celebrate the Independence Day in co-operation with the Indian National Congress on January 26.

21. Congress Socialists' Suspicion of the Communists, as Revealed from an Intercepted Letter: Extract from *Daily Digest*, 12 January 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 7/2/42, NAI.

The Secretary of the U.P. Congress Socialist Party, in calling a meeting of the U.P. Congress Socialists, writes: 'The Communists will do us great harm. They are playing mischief with us as you are already aware in their baseless policy. Nowadays Communists are saying "Help

British in the war”, but we have come to know by a reliable source their real ambition is to be released from jail and they are pretending to help Britain in the war and think Congress Socialist Party will be in jail which will strengthen their position everywhere. They will make parallel organizations and consolidate their power.’

22. Bihar CSP Enlists Kisan and Mazdoor Volunteers: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The Council of Action of the Bihar Congress Socialist Party met at Patna on the 12th and 13th February and decided to enroll kisan and mazdoor volunteers who should maintain constant touch with the masses and keep them informed of the progress of the war. In the event of internal trouble, the role of these volunteers will be to assist the masses to attack the representatives of capitalism and thereafter seize power and form a Government. Basawan Singh, who took a prominent part in these discussions, is reported to have appeared on the same platform with Babu Anugrah Narayan Singh [Sinha] at Sasaram obviously with the object of creating the impression that the Socialist Party’s volunteers will be enrolled for the same purpose as the Congress volunteers.

23. Activities of the Socialist Group of the Kisan Sabha: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of April 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The Socialist group of the Kisan Sabha held a conference at Patepur in Muzaffarpur district on the 18th and 19th. Abul Hayat Chand of Patna presided and the other speakers were Basawan Singh and Reasat Karim. The speeches were on the usual lines to the effect that the war was imperialist and the Indians should take no part in it, but confine themselves to forming village defence units. Members of this group are busy collecting funds for an All-India Kisan Conference in opposition to the Conference of the Sahajanand group which it is proposed to hold at Bihta next month.

24. The War: Imperialist or People’s?—Attitude of the Congress
Socialist Party towards the War¹
SWAND, Vol. 2, pp. 8–23.

The Party has always condemned wars between peoples as barbarous. But its attitude towards war differs in principle from that of pacifists and believers in absolute non-violence. The Party’s opposition to war is based fundamentally on political grounds. We realize that wars are inevitable in a society based on exploitation and therefore we recognize the impossibility of eliminating wars without eliminating the root causes of rivalries and conflicts and without establishing socialism. We further recognize the justice and progressive character of certain wars, i.e. wars of national liberation conducted by an oppressed people against their oppressors, of serfs against landowners, of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. In such wars socialists will always sympathise with the oppressed people struggling to cast off the foreign yoke and

the proletariat struggling to overthrow the capitalist rule of the bourgeoisie. In the epoch when capitalism was still progressive and was destroying feudalism and absolutism, socialists could very well sympathise with that bourgeoisie which helped in the accomplishment of this task notwithstanding the fact that they also conquered foreign lands. The fundamental historic significance of such wars did not alter by these acts of injustice and pillage on the part of the bourgeoisie. Such an epoch was opened by the French Revolution and the period between 1789 and 1871 (Paris Commune) was characterized by many wars which bore such a progressive character. These were nationalist wars waged against foreign domination and the general tendency of the wars of this period was to weaken and destroy absolutism and feudalism. This historic task was performed by the bourgeoisie which opened the perspective for the development of a proletarian struggle for socialism.

But we are living today in an imperialist epoch. Capitalism has exhausted its progressive character and has become a reactionary force. It has become a fetter on the forces of production. Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism. Free trade and competition have been superseded by the tendencies of monopoly. The productive forces have been developed to such an extent that they can no longer be held within the capitalist framework. Humanity must either pass over to socialism or witness recurrent wars among capitalist nations for the preservation of capitalist economy and the bourgeois rule.

Such an epoch was reached in the 20th century. The war of 1914–1918 was an imperialist war waged to serve imperialist ends. War is: politics continued by other (i.e. forcible) means. The world war of 1914–18 simply continued the imperialist policy of colonial robbery, oppression of foreign nations and the suppression of labour movements.

The present war is of the same character. The epoch of imperialism has not ended notwithstanding the fact that there has come into existence as a result of the last war a state which claims to be socialist. The dominant economy of the world continues to be capitalist. When the war broke out in September 1939, its imperialist character was generally recognized. The national units of the Communist parties took up a straight ‘anti-war’ position. They said in effect, ‘This is an imperialist war’. From the point of view of the working class, there is nothing to choose between rival ruling classes; and therefore the working class in each country has the sole duty of attacking its own ruling class in order to end the war by the defeat of all ruling classes and by an international socialist revolution....

... The Russian invasion by Hitler brought Soviet Russia on the side of the Allies. The Communist Party of India, however, did not consider this fact to be sufficient to alter the character of the war and continued to support their thesis of active opposition to war. They were of course perturbed at the news and in their naivete believed for many months that Churchill was instrumental in provoking Hitler to declare war against Russia. But the Communist Party of India is not its own master. It is tied to the chariot wheel of the Third International through the British Communist Party, which is ruled by the Russian Communists who are guided in the formulation of their policies solely by the requirements of Russia’s foreign policy. It received the mandate from abroad to offer unconditional support to Britain and U.S.A. in their war effort as Russia’s presence on the side of the Allies had changed the character of the war. The war had now become anti-fascist and it was the duty of the working class to support the Allies. The Communist Party quickly obeyed the mandate and has produced a new thesis in which it advocates a policy of unconditional support to Allies on the alleged ground that the war has ceased to be imperialist and has become a people’s war. It is sad to reflect that the

Communist parties have proved disloyal to their convictions and tasks. The very purpose for which the Third International was brought into being by Lenin has been defeated. The Third International has failed. No one can play hide-and-seek with history. The crisis engendered by war has torn the mask from off its face and revealed to it its true colours.

We shall examine in detail the new Communist thesis and shall try to explain the historical causes which have led the world Communists to abjure their convictions in a moment of crisis and to betray the cause of revolutionary socialism. However unpleasant the task may be it has to be performed in a conscientious manner in the interests of truth.

Communists admit that the present is an imperialist epoch. It was only till yesterday that they used to characterize the war as imperialist. According to them it is Russia's entry into the war on the side of the Allies which has altered its character. They now say that it has become an anti-fascist war, a people's war. They have, however, to admit reluctantly that in India it has not become a people's war but then add that it is duty of the people to make it so and that it lies in their power to change it into a people's war. They pin their hope on dialectics which, they say, will perform the trick.

Every individual war has to be studied separately and with reference to the historic background in which it arises. Marxism does not ask who declares a war but in what complex of circumstances a war takes place. The present war is an outcome of 'capitalist imperialism' and 'of the policy of conquest' pursued by both the groups of belligerent nations. War is a continuation of policy of politics by other (i.e. forcible) means. As a matter of fact the war started years ago and Sept. 1939 was only a further phase of it. The nature of the war has to be determined with reference to the basic policies and objectives of the principal combatants. The principal combatants in this contest are England and U.S.A. on the one side and Germany, Italy and Japan on the other. They are all imperialists. The first group consists of satiated nations while the other of those which lagged behind in the race for the partition of the world and are accordingly unsatiated. The first group fights for retaining its empire, while the other for enlarging its territories. The present war is being fought for repartitioning the world in accordance with the new relationship of imperialist forces. The mere fact that Russia has become a victim of German aggression will not change the character of the war. It would be true to say that Russia not being a principal, has no other aim but to defend itself against Nazi aggression. It has therefore to acquiesce in the Atlantic Charter which has only a limited application and which does not rest on principles on the basis of which alone a just and an enduring peace can be secured. Stalin has also made it clear that Russia is fighting a nationalistic war for the defence of the Fatherland. Obviously he does not want to frighten the bourgeoisie of the allied nations and their governments and for this very reason he has to put aside those ideals which should guide the actions of socialists in settling international relations. The alliance of Russia with England has not changed a bit the war and peace aims of England and still Stalin recommends England and America as defenders and liberators of Asia. The truth of the matter is that each one of the Allies is fighting to safeguard its own national interests.

A modern war between the great powers does not signify a conflict between democracy and fascism but a struggle of two imperialisms for the redivision of the world. ... The war continues to be a war against Germany. It has not become a war against fascism as such because imperialist democracy cannot be expected to kill its blood brother which is fascism. The present war does not aim at the destruction of imperialism and therefore cannot lead to the destruction of fascism which is its child. So long as imperialism flourishes, fascist reaction

will flourish. In times of war these capitalist democracies will tend more and more towards fascism. The exigencies of war will imprint upon them a military outlook and will make them more totalitarian....

.... A genuine people's war should lead to the destruction of both imperialism of capitalist democracy and of fascism. But he will indeed be a bold man who would say that the present war is being fought to destroy imperialism. That would mean that the British and the American Governments are waging war to destroy themselves.

.... It may be said that it is our duty to consider everything from the point of view of the interests of the Soviet Union which is just now ranged on the side of the Allies fighting in self defence against Hitler and that it becomes the duty of the world proletariat to line up behind the Allied governments. It would be wrong to view the whole question solely from one point of view, however important that point of view may be. Marxist dialectics teaches us to grasp the reality in its entirety and complexity. It is a lying propaganda to say that the present war is being fought by any side for freedom and democracy. The satiated powers want to maintain the status quo and preserve their capitalist class interests. Do we not see before our very eyes that civil liberties are being curtailed, that people are being over-burdened with taxation and urged to sacrifice themselves for the bourgeoisie? Is it also not a fact that India, Egypt and the African colonies are still being held in subjection?...

¹ The exact date of this piece written by Acharya Narendra Deva is not known, but it is certain that it was written in 1942.

25. Zamindari System Must Be Ended; D.S. Seth's Address at UP Kisan Conference

The National Herald, 2 March 1942.

Jaunpur

'Really speaking so long as the three fundamental demands of the Kisans, namely, end of the zamindari system, liquidation of old debts of all kinds and fixing of rent at par with the income-tax, are not acceded, any real improvement in the economic condition of the kisans is impossible. No doubt, foreign rule impedes the prosperity of the kisans and the zamindari system is also an outcome of the British rule, but to think that the end of the foreign rule will automatically bring really better days for the kisans is to shut one's eyes from reality. The only cure lies in socialism', observed Mr. Damodar Swarup Seth, in his presidential address at the U.P. Kisan Conference at Pratabganj Sikrara in the Jaunpur district.

.... Concluding, Mr. Seth said: 'The present is an era of great changes and perhaps this conference of ours is the last conference in an age which is ending. A Great international war is raging all over the world. It is very difficult to foresee the result of the war at this stage. But, whichever side wins, the world's upheaval will not end there. Immediately after the war or perhaps in its course itself, a series of revolutions will break out which may ultimately gather the momentum of a world revolution which will inaugurate a new and happier order of things. Objective conditions point towards it. We have to prepare ourselves for that eventuality.'



26. Extract from Bombay Province Weekly Letter No. 13, 4 April 1942,
about Socialists' Call to Students

Bombay Home Department (Political) S.D. 171, MSA.

A leaflet entitled 'A Call to Students in the present circumstances' under the signatures of M.P. Limaye and other Socialist students has been circulated among the student community of Poona, Nasik, Thana, Ratnagiri and Khandesh. Young men are exhorted to form unions in their own districts and to make contact with the peasants and workers among the villages during the coming vacation. They are urged to break free from British Imperialism while at the same time resisting Japanese aggression they should secure and retain their own independence. Which is all very nice and does no one any harm. It is highly unlikely that this exhortation will have the slightest effect.

27. Socialist Activity in Cannanore: Fortnightly Report for Madras

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Socialists held a meeting at Cannanore in Malabar on the 23rd. It was stated in the notice about the meeting that the present Government and their officers are unable to do anything to help India and that the people themselves must undertake the defence of their country. The question of taking action against the authors of the notice is under consideration.

28. Socialist Attempting to Manufacture Bombs Gets Injured: Extract
from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Laksmi Narayan Gupta, a Bania of Pupri, Muzaffarpur, was injured by an explosion on the morning of the 24th April 1942 and following his arrest later in the day, his damaged hand was amputated by the Civil surgeon of Darbhanga. He is well known as a socialist cum Kisan Sabha worker and was arrested in June last year when he was strongly suspected in a case of armed dacoity with murder, but had to be released for want of evidence. It appears that at the time of the incident he was attempting to prepare bombs, but unfortunately he and his relations had time to remove traces of these operations.

29. M.K. Gandhi Will Launch a New Movement: Yusuf Meherally's
Call to Congressmen to Be Prepared to Join Struggle

The Bombay Chronicle, 25 May 1942.

Poona, May 24

Tha Mahatma Gandhi is shortly going to launch a new movement was revealed by Mr. Yusuf J. Meherally, Congress Socialist Leader and Mayor of Bombay in the course of his speech last evening at the Congress House Maidan.

Mr. Meherally said that every loyal Congressman should keep himself ready to join the struggle as soon as the call comes from the Mahatma.

Referring to Pakistan, Mr. Meherally said that the Muslim League has not so far put forth its definite scheme for Pakistan only because they knew too well its rejection the moment it was announced. Pakistan, he said would be detrimental to the interests of the Muslims themselves. If the Muslim provinces such as N.W.F.P., Punjab and Sind were to be separated, the grants from the Central Government now enjoyed by these provinces would be stopped with the result their budgetary position would be pitiful.

In conclusion, Mr. Meherally said that his idea of swaraj was swaraj for the poor to find means to feed and clothe the peasantry, to educate their children and generally raise their standard of living.

30. Maharashtra Provincial CSP Holds Private Meeting in Poona:
Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

A private meeting of the executive body of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Socialist Party was held at Poona on May 27th at which it was decided to support the movement, if and when it was launched. At this meeting, Mr. K.S. Gore, Secretary of the Party, stated that the coming struggle would call for every resource and tactical ingenuity of the Party as it was bound to meet with stern suppression by Government.

31. Ram Nandan Misra at Wardha, 15–22 June 1942

P.N. Chopra, ed., *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, p. 230.

Ram Nandan Misra, a well-known leader of Bihar, CSP, after attending the Bidaul (Bempur) A.I.K. Conference went to Wardha. Acharya Narendra Deo was already staying there. Ram Nandan Misra also stopped in Mahatma Gandhi's Kutia for about a week from 15th June to 22nd June 1942.

Ram Nandan Misra, while giving an account of his interview with Mahatma Gandhi narrating the conversation which had followed between himself and Mahatma Gandhi, made the following disclosure:

When Ram Nandan Misra greeted Mahatma Gandhi with 'Pranam' the latter replied, 'My cordial blessings to the leader of the party which has ever been my guiding light.' This reply was understood to convey a covert allusion to the suggestion which had been made to Mahatma Gandhi about three months ago (reported then) by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (Congress Socialist leader) regarding the mass movement and the opposition to 'The scorched earth policy' of Government.

Misraji (Ram Nandan Misra) after receiving blessing said that he had been waiting merely for his guidance. Mahatma Gandhi remarked that he knew that the C.S.P. was at one with him and added that he wanted to start a mass movement which had always been greatly desired by that party. Many members of the Congress Working Committee were not in favour of the mass movement and he, therefore, expected that the C.S.P. and Congress workers would stand by his programme. He further expressed his wish that the A.I.C.S.P. should call a meeting which he would attend whether he was invited to it or not.



32. Sheer Window Dressing: Yusuf Meherally on Expansion of Viceroy's Executive Council

The Bombay Chronicle, 7 July 1942.

Madras, July 6

Questions relating to the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council, the attitude of the Socialists in regard to any likely development in the country and the difference between the Communists and the Socialists in India were discussed by Mr. Yusuf Meherally, Mayor of Bombay, at a press conference this morning.

'The expansion of the Viceroy's Council' said Mr. Meherally, 'left the country cold, and Congressmen amused. It is doubtful if there is any Government in any country of the world which is so out of touch with public opinion and public feeling as Government of India.'

Window Dressing

It is difficult to imagine what useful purpose this expansion will serve, since the major political parties are not at all interested in it. But perhaps, there is one purpose lurking behind it—and that is to serve as international window-dressing. Perhaps the idea is to give the impression to American Public opinion that Britain has at last done something worth while in India. But one cannot fool all the people all the time. Sooner rather than later, informed opinion in the world is likely to know the true facts about India. What India demands is not tinkering with forms, but a complete and immediate transfer of real power. Nothing short of complete independence will satisfy the country.

Socialists Loyal to Congress

As to the attitude of the Congress Socialist Party towards any likely development in the country, Mr. Meherally said:

'Congress Socialists have always been good Congressmen and their loyalty to the great organization has always been unquestioned. They have always identified themselves with any forward move made by the Congress, and if the Indian National Congress takes a bold and decisive step, the Socialists will be found in the front of the fighting line.'

33. Pre-rebellion Activities of Congress in Central Provinces: Ever-increasing Participation of CSP

P.N. Chopra, ed., *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, p. 236.

41. One significant feature of pre-rebellion activities of Congress in the Central Provinces was the ever-increasing participation in Congress deliberations of the extreme Congress Socialist Party group. V.S. Dandekar was one of a party deputed by the Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee on 13th July 1942 to wait on Gandhi to seek advice regarding the food situation, on the 24th July, V.S. Dandekar and Maganlal Bagdi were appointed to a committee to collect funds for satyagraha and were also placed on a list of successors of the President and Secretary of the Nagpur Nagar Congress committee in the event of the latter's arrest; Dandekar was likewise a frequent speaker at Congress meetings, and, before the end of July, the Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee agreed to a suggestion of the Congress Socialist Party members of the

body to appoint a Sub-Committee to organize students. Dandekar and Maganlal Bagdi went underground as soon as Gandhi was arrested and their subsequent exploits as leaders of the Hindustan Red Army need no repetition....

34. Yusuf Meherally's Call to Youth

The Bombay Chronicle, 29 July 1942.

'Like all Congressmen, your thoughts should be centered on the possible developments of August 7. In previous movements students have been a wash-out', observed Mr. Yusuf Meherally, Mayor of Bombay in his inaugural address to the students of the Jain Mahavira Vidyalyaya this evening at Gowalia Tank.

In the history of every nation, he continued, there came moments when discretion had to be thrown to the winds and caution forgotten. The only paramount and overriding consideration was the call of the country. He appealed to the students to respond to Gandhiji's call with the spontaneity of youth.

Foreign Invention

Referring to the Hindu-Muslim problem, Mr. Meherally said that this problem as well as other communal problems were the making of the British. As such they would disappear with British rule in India, and not before.

The speaker also criticized Dr. Ambedkar who, he said was playing the Imperialist game. Till recently he was more implacable in his opposition to the British than even Gandhiji. But with his entry into the Viceroy's Cabinet, all that had changed!

'Reds' Criticised

Referring to the role of the Indian Communists, the speaker said that no socialism could succeed in India, whose roots were not firmly planted in the soil. The think of mechanically transplanting the Communism of Russia, without consideration of our own life, culture and other conditions, could only spell disaster. Even in previous Congress struggles, the Communists had opposed them.

The tragedy of the Indian Communists was that they could not move without taking their instructions from 'their bosses' elsewhere.

35. Socialist Homage to M.K. Gandhi's Leadership: Will Line Up with Congress in Non-violent Struggle for Freedom

The Bombay Chronicle, 7 August 1942.

Bombay, August 6

The National Executive of the All-India Congress Socialist Party met today at the residence of Mr. Purshottamdas Tricamdas at Malabar Hill. Shrimati Kamaladevi presided. Prominent among those present were Acharya Narendra Deo, Mr. Yusuf Meherally, Mayor of Bombay, Mr. Achyut Patwardhan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Mr. Asoka Mehta and Babu Sham Nandan Sinha, General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha. After two hours' discussion, the Executive adopted a statement in the course of which the Executive says:

‘Shed Imperialism’

The gallant people of China and Russia are defending their freedom with the last drop of their blood. If Britain and America are genuine for helping Russia and China, the biggest step in this direction would be for Britain to shed her Imperialism, and thus to make it a struggle of free peoples for the defence of their freedom and for a new International Order based on freedom and the co-operation of democratic peoples. The British people have once again failed to force their rulers to change their short-sighted policy of domination. This has exposed the cause of the United Nations to the terrible risk of defeat.

The Indian National Congress with its traditional devotion to freedom and democracy cannot keep itself aloof and watch this process passively, in the hour of crisis.

The Indian National Congress has patiently striven to work in co-operation with the people of China and Russia and even the people of Great Britain. But the British Government has thwarted these efforts at every step. It has misrepresented its policies and sought to weaken it in every way it could.

The British Government refuses to let go its imperialist grip over the lives and destiny of the Indian people and after exhausting every peaceful method, the Congress has been forced to stake all its strength on a non-violent mass struggle to attain that freedom for the people of India, without which they cannot fulfil their national and international tasks.

The Indian National Congress has called upon the people of India, in this critical hour to pass through the fiery ordeal of a non-violent mass struggle as it is the only way to ensure our freedom as well as to defend our hearths and homes. We are fortunate that at this grave moment in our history we have amongst us one who has an unquestioned place in the hearts of the people of India. We offer our homage to Mahatma Gandhi and pledge ourselves without reservation to the great struggle which the Congress has determined to launch under his inspiring leadership. We have faith that such a leader and such a cause can know no failure.

Chapter 7. Women and the Dalits: Organizations and Activities

A. WOMEN

1. Resolutions Passed at the 16th Session of the All India Women's Conference (AIWC) Held in Cocanada, 29 December to 2 January 1942

All India Women's Conference (AIWC) Papers, File No. 21, Microfilm, NMML, Roll 30.

Resolution on Civil Liberties

In these times when the encroachment on national freedom threatens to destroy those inherent individual rights which are so precious a heritage of civilization, this Conference associates itself with such organizations all over the world, as are striving to preserve the fundamental rights of all human beings, which, among others, are the

- (a) Rights of Association;
- (b) Security of Property;
- (c) Liberty of Speech;
- (d) Freedom of the Press;
- (e) Freedom of religious worship;
- (f) Freedom of street processions and demonstrations;
- (g) Right of personal security, such as will guarantee that no individual shall be arrested or imprisoned unless it be by legal indictment and by process of the ordinary courts of law.

This Conference records its emphatic protest against the attempts to curtail unnecessarily the civil liberties of the Indian people and demands the immediate restoration of all such liberties.

Resolution on War and Peace

Proposed by Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit

Seconded by Mrs. Hannah Sen

This Conference is of the opinion

- (a) That permanent peace cannot be achieved except on the principles of freedom and justice equally applicable to all nations and races and without an immediate and

fundamental change in the present structure, for a post-war world can be reconstructed only out of policies initiated and operated during the present war.

- (b) That Britain's statements regarding her war aims cannot make any moral appeal to the peoples of the world so long as she refuses to alter her present policy in regard to India.

This Conference reiterates its abhorrence of war and declares that if war is persisted in it must inevitably lead not only to meaningless destruction but also to the deterioration of moral values. It, therefore, firmly believes that human progress is possible only in a world freed from military domination and based on the acceptance of international disarmament.

2. Circular from Sucheta Kripalani, Secretary, Women's Department, 31 January 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. WD 2/1940, NMML.

Dear Friend,

Soon after the formation of the Women's Department¹ the Congress organization was involved in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Most of the organizers were in jail. As a consequence the work of the department was in abeyance for the last 14 or 15 months. Now that the C. D. movement is suspended the different branches of Congress activities must be revived and reorganized. The recent resolution of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. and the instructions issued by the A.I.C.C. office have indicated the lines on which the work is to be organized at present when the country is more or less in a state of emergency. It has been pointed out that we have all to help in making the Congress organization strong and disciplined....

... Our department has to carry this message to the women of India and to organize them with a view to participate fully and effectively in the various constructive activities of the Congress that have already been organized or may be organized hereafter. Through Charkha, village industries, literacy campaigns, Harijan uplift and such other work can we approach women of all classes and communities. Now is the time when the work can be taken up and if done with due earnestness and concentration, will prepare women to face the hard times that we are passing through and the harder ones that yet may be in store for us....

1. The Women's Committees were formed about a year and a half back and since then conditions have changed. Wherever necessary changes may be made in the personnel to make the Committees more effective.

2. A meeting of the prominent women workers of the province be called to discuss the different schemes suggested and devise ways and means for carrying on the work.

3. Instead of having formal sub-Committees in each district it is better at first to start the work at a few centres where enthusiastic and energetic workers are available. These few centres should be worked effectively and successfully before opening new centres. The provincial Committees have not only to help, guide and coordinate the work at the different centres but wherever possible open model centres.

4. Only such items of work should be taken up for which the necessary personnel, training and other organizational facilities are or can be made available. In this connection I would

specially recommend that work be begun by taking up the khadi programme and women may be taught spinning and all other preparatory processes thereto.

5. Provincial Committees should try to organize centres or camps to train workers. The courses prescribed should aim at practical efficiency and according to need there should be periodical refresher courses. At some centres elementary courses of studies in History, Politics, economics, social science, health and hygiene etc. may so far as possible be organized. While the centres of training may be organized on more or less permanent basis the duration of a camp may not exceed a month at the outset.

6. Volunteer corps should be created wherever possible.

These are a few suggestions. The organizers or committees have to use their own initiative coupled with knowledge of local circumstances and the facilities available. As constructive work is political as well as social it may be that certain women's institutions unconnected with politics may be working some of its items as a measure of social reform. Wherever possible our organizations should seek to co-operate with such centres of work. There is not among women that sharp division between political, social and philanthropic activities as exist in men. Full advantage must be taken of this fluidity.

You will please send information to this office about any women's institutions that may exist in your province and the work that they undertake. I would also like to have a list of active Congress women workers and the field in which each one is likely to be interested and work. Please let me know if any work so far has been done by your department, how you now proposed to organize the work and what help you require from the office. Please also let me know if any work so far has been done by your department, how you now propose to organize the work and what help you require from the office. Please also let me know how many women offered Satyagraha in your province, the terms of imprisonment that they suffered and the fines imposed on them.

¹ The AICC Women's Department was started in 1940 in order to mobilize and train women for national political work.

3. Letter from Maulana Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru, 3 March 1942, about the Women's Branch in the AICC and the Need to Create 'Practical Enthusiasm'

Correspondence with Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 5, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlal,

We have created a Women's Branch in the A.I.C.C. Office, but it is not enough. We have to do something more to create practical enthusiasm in the work. I wish to appoint an Advisory Committee, the members of which may devote their time to this work. I have the following names in view:

Mrs Pandit
Miss Mirdulla
Mrs Asafali and
Mrs Iftikharuddin

Including Mrs Kripalani as the Secretary in charge, this committee would comprise of five members. Please wire your opinion, and if you have to suggest any more name, you should certainly do so.

Yours sincerely,

A.K. Azad

4. Report of the Women's Department of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee from 15 December 1941 to 15 March 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part 1)/1942, p. 185, NMML.

Women who are members of Ward Committees and other active workers have always associated themselves with the programme and policy of the Congress in Delhi. After the suspension of the Satyagraha Movement the women's department has been functioning regularly. The following activities have engaged its attention during the period under review.

- (1) Reception of Satyagrahis on their release.
- (2) (a) Participation in the Independence Day celebrations.
(b) Prominent share in making the Flag Days successful.
- (3) Bringing women in large numbers to attend public meetings addressed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and on the occasion of monthly Flag Salutations.
- (4) Arranging of three meetings of women workers to which Sm. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Mrs. Brij Lal Nehru, Mrs. V.L. Pandit were invited.
- (5) Arranging two public meetings exclusively for women at which the present congress programme of work was explained. One of these meetings was held in a predominantly Muslim locality.
- (6) The Department is at present engaged in making arrangements for giving congress women workers instructions in political work, First Aid, emergency training and community singing.

The AICC Women's Department and Arrangements for Evacuee Children

5. Jawaharlal Nehru to Sucheta Kripalani, 8 May 1942
Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 41, NMML.

My dear Sucheta,

As I was leaving Lucknow I received two letters from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in which he asked us to help him in making arrangements in the U.P. for evacuee children from Calcutta. These children are apparently from poor folks who live in kuchcha houses. The number of children involved is about 60,000 but of course all these will not come to our province and there will be several agencies at work. As I was leaving I spoke to Rafi Ahmed about this and I have sent a telegram to Maulana to communicate with Rafi.

It is mainly a matter for women to deal with. Possibly the new committee you have formed might take it up. Maulana's idea is that we should have a sub-committee of the P.C.C. to which we might add non-Congressmen also. As I was traveling to Delhi, I met Paliwal at Tundla

station and told him all about this. He agreed to take all necessary steps but he was not quite sure how he should proceed in the matter.

I think it would be a good thing if Rafi Ahmed and you could go to Calcutta and see things for yourself. But before you do so you should await for the Maulana's summons. Meanwhile there should be no duplication of effort which might produce confusion. I have therefore suggested to Maulana to deal with Rafi Ahmed directly.

I am going to Lahore tomorrow night and from there to Kulu where my address will be: Naggar (Kulu).

Yours

JN

6. Sucheta Kripalani to Jawaharlal Nehru, 12 May 1942, from
AICC Office, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, about the Proposed
Arrangements

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 41, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I received your letter of 8th on my return here yesterday. Rafi Sahib met me at Lucknow in connection with the problem of these evacuee children and also showed me yours and Maulana Sahib's letters. We have called a joint meeting of the Women's Sub-Committee of the P.C.C. on the 18th at Lucknow, to consider Maulana Sahib's proposal. Mrs. Pandit, Umabhabhi and some other ladies too have been invited to the meeting. I shall again write to you after the 18th. Rafi Sahib has written to Maulana for further details. On hearing from him we may both go to Calcutta.

Rafi Sahib suggested that we should open camps for these children in the smaller towns of the Western Districts of U.P. as they are comparatively safe. We may also try to distribute some children in private homes. Perhaps the U.P. Bengalees may help us in this. We are approaching the Bengali Ladies Club of Allahabad to find out their reaction to our proposal.

I hope you and Indu are enjoying your holiday.

Yours

Sucheta

7. Letter from Sucheta Kripalani to Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 May 1942,
about the Sudden Arrest of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 41, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlalji,

The sudden arrest of Rafi Sahib has put some hitch in our work regarding the refugees children. I am sending you a copy of my letter to Maulana Sahib which will explain things. However, I hope we may be able to do something at our meeting on the 18th.

Yours

Sucheta

8. Letter from Sucheta Kripalani to Maulana Azad, 14 May 1942,
Asking for Details about the Evacuee Children

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 41, NMML.

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Rafi Sahib told me that he had written to you to give some details about the plan of evacuated children from Calcutta for which the Bengal Government was prepared to bear the expenses. Jawaharlalji wrote to Rafi Sahib and me that we might go to Calcutta and consult you and others concerned and see things for ourselves. We had called a joint meeting of the Women's Sub-Committee and the current programme Sub-Committee of the P.C.C. at Lucknow on the 18th to consider ways and means for the arrangement of the evacuee children.

I do not know whether you conveyed any detailed information to Rafi Sahib. I heard nothing from him till he was arrested. If you have sent anything I would request you to send me a copy of your communication. If you have not written anything then you will please let me have such details as I would be able to place before this joint meeting on the 18th and which will be helpful in its deliberation. I am here till the 17th evening. If I cannot get your letter by that time you will please address it to Lucknow care the P.C.C. Office, 61 Abott Road to reach me there on the 18th at the latest. If no details are available, I am afraid, the joint meeting will not be able to devise any concrete plan.

You will also please inform me with whom future correspondence in this matter may be carried on. Will there be any need for some of us to come there and see things for ourselves and talk over matters with those concerned.

Yours sincerely,

Sd

Smt. Sucheta Devi

Copy forwarded to Pt. J. Nehru for information.

S.D.

9. Mridula Sarabhai to Jawaharlal Nehru, 30 May 1942, Enclosing the
Draft Resolutions of the AIWC Standing Committee

GOI Home Political File No. 188/42, NAI.

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I am on my way to Bardoli. We have a meeting of the executive of the G.C.C.C. tomorrow. If this meeting had not been called and if I had received Singh's tele[gram] in time I would have tried to reach Lucknow on the 29th. I was eager to do so.

Thanks for the tele[gram]. I was annoyed to find that you did not get my letter posted to Lahore. I want to make inquiries. Therefore please let me know if you have not got it. I do not know why but the post gets extraordinarily delayed—the censors may be on the hunt, and be exhibiting their efficiency by being inefficient.

I herewith send you draft resolution which some of us propose to move at the A.I.W.C. Standing Committee meeting on the 7th. I want your opinion whether we should press for

these—personally I feel strongly about them and would like that the A.I.W.C. expresses its opinion on the burning questions of the day. If you are in favour and would like to make the necessary changes then please do it and sent it with Didda, a copy has been sent to Bapu for his suggestions. Because some of the members favour that we should get opinions from both of you, I shall be going to Ahm[edabad] in a day or two and from 6th to 9th will be at Abrama.

Yours affectionately,

Sd. Mridu

Resolutions sent:

- 1) Molestation of women
- 2) Cripps Mission
- 3) Evacuees from Burma

Molestation of Women

The attention of the Standing Committee of the All India Women's Conference has been drawn to the many instances of molestation of women by soldiers in many parts of the country. Such molestation becomes all the more reprehensible when the victims happen to be evacuated from their native soil. Such women uprooted from their normal surroundings are hardly in a position to organize their defence.

It is the duty of all branches of our organization to keep a vigilant eye on the situation. They should make it a point to report every case of molestation to the Central body.

The Committee expresses its strong resentment at the attitude adopted by a section of Anglo-India Press on the question and their effort to explain it away as 'good-humoured horse-play' or 'a little rejoicing'. It is necessary to warn the papers concerned that such conceptions of a 'good time' are totally foreign to Indian culture and way of life; and any effort to put a 'sporting' interpretation on such behaviour will cause intense resentment amongst the people of India.

The Committee also feels that in the time like the present it is almost futile to look to the authorities for protection. The arm of law today is only a limb of war. As the emergency comes nearer the resources of the Govt. will be more and more diverted from civil or military affairs and the only sanction available will be the one forged by the people by their cooperative efforts.

In the troublous that lie ahead, women must learn the art of 'self Defence'. There will be many occasions when they have to protect their life, their children, their property and even their virtue. And they must be prepared to do this by every means in their power. The society too must not apply the criteria of normal times to the unfortunate victims of such molestation. These victims are the tragic by-products of the vast holocaust that is engulfing the world. They deserve our full sympathy.

Our men, and particularly the Indian soldiers, bear a heavy responsibility. They have traditions of chivalry second to none. The soldiers must that none of them are guilty of tarnishing that proud record. Not only that, they must give, wherever they go, protection to women. Only then will be they be worthy of their ancestors and the immortal land of their birth.

The Committee calls upon the women of India to be prepared for all eventualities and to train themselves individually and through cooperative effort to defend all that they hold dear. Civilisation is in the reverse gear, and today, as in the dawn of human history, only an enlightened cooperative life has a chance of survival.

Cripps' Mission

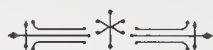
The Standing Committee of the All India Women's Conference had hoped, notwithstanding a long history of disappointments, that the British Empire in its hour of distress would at last shed the panoply of Imperialism and take the hand of friendship of oppressed people the world over in general and of India in particular. The announcement of the Cripps' Mission, because of its association with a man known for his catholic and human outlook, evoked a certain expectation everywhere. But the unfolding of the mission has left in us only sorrow not unmingled with anger. The mission turned out to be another imperial manoeuvre. It ended in sowing deeper the seeds of discord in this unfortunate land, it proved reluctant to part with power and when gripped with a straight issue of India vs. Britain the velvet glove was torn away from the iron hand, and its grip became firmer than ever. The record of the Cripps' Mission makes it difficult for the Indian people to extend their moral sympathy to their Imperial rulers. It further bears testimony to the corrosive power of imperialism that could bend to its will so good a man as Sir Stafford Cripps.

The fundamental unity between Cripps and Churchill has finally disillusioned the Indian people, and has irrevocably blasted the moral foundations of the British rule in India. Only a complete withdrawal from (transfer of responsibility to the people of) India will restore to the British people the moral sanction that alone can make their victory of value to the world. Without such a withdrawal (transfer of responsibility) the British may win the war but most assuredly lose the peace. The Cripps' Mission may have furthered the claims of war, but it has betrayed the cause of peace.

Evacuees from Burma

The Standing Committee of the All India Women's Conference has learned with deep distress about the many-fold [sic] suffering patiently borne by the thousands of evacuees who have struggled their way out of Burma. The failure of the Government of Burma to rise to the occasion made the plight of these evacuees more desperate than it need have been otherwise. The civil administration failed to function even when military operations were still some distance away. A situation was created where the common people were involved in utmost misery and desolation. Unaided by the Government, often obstructed by a most annoying red-tape, starving, attacked by fevers and pestilence, harried by anti-social elements, these refugees have been reduced to the 'Scum on the Earth'. But to us, they are our kith and kin who in their great distress are returning to their motherland. Our hearts go out to them in sympathy. A free India would have striven to solve their many-fold [sic] difficulties and to absorb them into the vast fabric of her economy. But in the slave India they must drift about uncared and not unoften unwanted.

This Committee calls upon its Branches to render full assistance to Indian evacuees from Burma, Malaya and other countries across the seas, in collaboration of all institutions engaged in similar work.



10. Sucheta Kripalani's Tour of Lahore and the Formation of Women's Sub-committees in Lahore and Amritsar and Their Activities: Report of Ram Kishan, General Secretary, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, Lahore, 1 July 1942

AICC Papers, File No. P-22 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

In the middle of April Shrimati Suchita Devi Kripalani Secretary All India Congress committee Women Department came to Lahore and after her efforts a provincial Congress Women Sub-Committee was formed to carry on the Congress programme among women. After her departure from Lahore a Ladies Training Camp was opened at Lahore in which about forty ladies took part. Besides items of the constructive programme first aid training was given to them. The Camp lasted about fifteen days under the supervision of the Lahore District Congress Committee and the Women Sub-Committee. After this a ladies camp was started at Amritsar by the Women sub-Committee of the District Congress Committee Amritsar. About thirty ladies attended that Camp. The camp terminated successfully after fifteen days. At Lahore the Women Sub-Committee is going to organize such Camps in each ward. There are about fifteen Municipal Wards in the City of Lahore.

11. Report of AIWC Women Workers' Training Camp at Abrama, Surat District, 20 March–15 June 1942

AIWC Papers, Subject File No. 49, NMML.

The Women Workers' Training Camp to prepare provincial organizers was opened on 20th March at Abrama in pursuance of the resolution of the A.I.W.C. passed at its annual session in Cocanada. Although it was primarily meant to train provincial organizers for the A.I.W.C. branches, it was made available to workers coming from other institutions as well as individuals wishing to take advantage of the training.

The Organisers of the Camp had to work against considerable odds, the present crisis being the most difficult. The general prediction was that the Camp would be impossible under the present circumstances. It was therefore a genuine race for time. A place sufficiently far from the panickstricken [*sic*] cities and yet near enough for speakers to reach had to be found. It had also to be near the sea, have large open ground and a large enough structure to house fifty, with good water supply. Due to evacuation most such places had already been occupied; we were, therefore, fortunate to get this place which in addition has also a good healthy climate.

The work of organizing was divided amongst four, Shrimati Urmila Mehta, Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai, Shrimati Miraben and the Convener, so as to expedite the work. Shrimati Miraben brought a very experienced and practical mind to bear upon the initial planning of the Camp. The huts have been constructed charmingly as well as scientifically, so that they get the maximum of fresh air. The local people have given unstinted help from the very beginning, including the labourers who worked day and night to complete the task in time.

.... It was found necessary to limit the admission to 50 due to lack of accommodation. The Camp opened with a strength of 40, ten seats being reserved for students who were given special concession to join for two months only. Nine students joined on 15th April. One Camper had to be sent away due to her delicate state of health, and one was called away by her husband because of his illness. One Camp instructor was admitted as a student bringing the total up

to 48, hailing from 10 different Provinces (the highest being from Bombay city), including all communities, Muslims, Parsis, etc.

Every effort was made to extend the Camp facilities to the Harijans and Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru exerted herself on our behalf with the Harijan Sevak Sangh, but the prevailing scare was mainly responsible for our failure.

Out of 48, 33 have had their fees paid for, 5 being paid by the A.I.W.C. Branches, while others by various institutions or by individual sympathizers....

As laid down in the original policy, every effort has been made to enable the girls to participate in every department of the Camp. Various duties are allotted to them, including kitchen and sanitation work, library, hospital work, etc.

Although the period of the Camp was curtailed by a whole month it is gratifying that practically the entire curriculum with the exception of one or two subjects has been covered.

The curriculum was divided into 2 sections; General lectures and class instruction. The former was intended to give general information and provide the necessary background to the various social problems that were presented to them, these being covered by visiting guest speakers, each an expert in his own subject. The latter was more in the nature of practical work and was done by regular instructors. We have to be specially grateful to the Tata School of Social Work for supplying us with nearly half of the total instructors that came to us. In all 45 Speakers and 23 Instructors helped in the instruction. Special attention has been paid to handwork specially in teaching how to utilize and convert what may be generally termed as waste matter, into useful articles. The Campers have been introduced not only to the processes of industries, particularly one basic industry such as carding and spinning, but they have also been instructed how to organise and run industrial and health centres. Efforts have also been made to prepare them for the present emergency by theoretical as well as practical lessons including courses in Safety First, First Aid and A.R.P., Home Nursing. Magic Lantern shows were also provided on topics of interest.

Opportunities to gain practical experience were provided by visits to villages, as also to the Khadi Centre at Karadi. Statistical enquiries were carried on in the village to teach students how to collect information.

.... Most of the leading newspapers in India supplied free copies to the Camp while the Chicago Radio supplied a radio.

A Camp in a village has various limitations. Not only the modern necessities of life, but even vital food stuffs such as milk and vegetables is difficult to obtain as village producers have usually long term contracts for supplying cities. It has involved both extra expense as well as effort to get things from outside, sometimes even very trivial articles.

Friday was observed as Camp holiday as the week-ends had to be working days for the convenience of visiting guest speakers. Part of the time on holidays was devoted to excursions and sometimes to various items of interest such as debates, symposiums and ordinary camp fires. The items for the camp fire had to be original and devised by the Campers themselves. This afforded opportunity for their various creative talents, combining entertainment with education. One week a general election was held, candidates being run on definite lines, each party with its own programme, so as to enable the girls to learn how an election is conducted. This naturally led up to the formation of a mock legislature where bills were introduced and discussed. A reality was lent to this election by the professional misconduct of one of the candidates, who became disqualified making a by-election necessary. The manifestos and programmes put forth by the parties revealed a clear impress of the Camp instruction.

The Camp was fortunate in securing the services of Miss Indulekha Ghosh a very excellent music teacher from Shantiniketan to teach community singing. The only item that obstinately eluded our efforts was riding; although the Camp tried five different horses for over a month, it was found impossible to somehow bring about a harmonious co-ordination between the horse and the rider. The cycling lessons proved more successful although the injury to the cycles almost threatened to bulge our budget....

.... It is difficult to hazard prophecies as to the future turn over in terms of service to the country by those trained in this Camp. All that the Camp has done is to widen their vision, give them a bird's eye view of the major social problems, introduce them to the different methods of tackling these problems. They are yet far from being ready to completely shoulder burdens on their own or initiate new ventures. But one feels confident that with a certain amount of direction and supervision by more experienced workers and by Branch Committees they could be trained for very excellent work. It is therefore hoped that this Scheme will be continued as far as possible in its original form so that this very first effort may not go waste....

The Camp will close on the 15th June the last week being devoted to a full certificate Scout Training. Certificates of merit will be distributed after a general test has been taken.

Sd/- Kamladevi,

Convener,

Women Workers' Training

ABRAMA

Scheme, A.I.W.C.

8th June 1942

B. DALITS

12. Madras Backward Classes' Conference, 31 January 1942

IAR, 1942, Vol. 1, pp. 348-9.

Chairman's Address

The fourth session of the Madras Backward Classes' Conference was held at Madras on the 31st January 1942 at the Victoria Public Hall with Sir A.P. Patro in the chair. A large gathering was present on the occasion.

Sir A.P. Patro said that the foremost duty of every Indian today was to co-operate fully with the Allied powers in the fight against Nazism and to help in defending India against aggressors. Japan was bound to go down in the end with her Axis partners. He urged the people not to believe false rumours spread by foolish people. Everything possible was being done to defend India, and he would affirm that the defence arrangements here were sound.

As for the Indian political tangle, Sir A.P. Patro said there was 'no irreconcilable difference between India and Britain after the declaration of August 1940.' The present was not the occasion to bargain with Britain, engaged as she was in a life and death struggle. India wanted proof of goodwill and Great Britain had already assured the people of the goal of India. The defence of India ought to be India's first concern now. After the war, India might become freer and attain full Swaraj. Swaraj was not a thing to be conferred by another country: it must be worked out and established by the people themselves. The present times required unity and mutual co-operation to defeat the enemy and establish freedom for all suffering nations. Continuing, Sir A.P. Patro said that the backward classes should not quarrel with other

communities. But they should work for a classless society. Caste, communal and racial spirit were great obstacles to the growth of nationalism in India and wisdom lay in combating these. The backward communities had a valuable contribution to make in the war by virtue of their military traditions and their technical skill.

Sir A.P. Patro then emphasized the need for removing illiteracy through widespread diffusion of elementary education and adult education, and in this connection urged that the members of backward classes should be given all possible educational facilities by way of fee concessions, scholarships, meals for poor children etc. The need for effective rural reconstruction work, including promotion of handicrafts and small industries, was very urgent. Attention should be paid to the amelioration of the scheduled classes. It was a pity that nothing effective had yet been done for them. He wondered if the Hindu Maha Sabha included within the scope of its work this section of the Hindus. In his view, there was no need for 'the mockery of a Hindu Maha Sabha', seeing that 'the great Indian National Congress represented Indian feelings and sentiments' and was 'a national organization as far as it goes, and the only accredited organization for India.' The Muslim League spoke for the Muslims.

.... Mr. Ramaswami Naicker, addressing the gathering, said that the members of the Backward Classes should, as a first step to their social advance, shed caste and other distinctions in their own ranks and learn to stand united. They should promote inter-dining and inter-marriage with one another and get rid of all superstitions and out-of-date beliefs which retarded progress....

13. Eighth All India Dalit Jatiya Sangh Conference to Be Held on 1, 2, and 3 February at Townhall, Meerut (Translated from Hindi)

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 101, NMML.

All those who are called dalit, achhut, etc in Hindustan should come to the conference in large numbers on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Representatives will come from Punjab, Bihar, U.P., C.P., Bengal, Assam, Bombay, Madras, Delhi etc in large numbers. Sadhus, sanyasis, updesbaks and bhajanopadesaks will also come in large numbers. Many people have already sent in their confirmation.

Note 1:- On 1st February, Sunday, a procession will start from the Town Hall at 3 o'clock. All brothers should reach on time.

Note 2:- It was decided on 5 January at the house of Shri Bhola Ram Ji Sadh in a meeting room 7 to 8 in the evening that the Chaudhury Panch of all Biradaris, the master Bhajanopadesaks and the Secretaries and Pradhans of all Jati Sabhas should work for the success of the conference in their neighbouring villages....

Dr. Dharmprakash

Kanhaiyalal
M.A. (Prev.), Secretary

Local Secretary

R.P. Kishore, Office Secretary



14. Vishal Hindu Dharm Sammelan under the Auspices of the All India Dalit Jatiya Sammelan, Meerut (Translated from Hindi)

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Vol. 101, NMML.

Dharmopadesh of Bharatbhushan Mahamana Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, pillar of Hindu Society

Dear Hindu brothers! On the occasion of the Eighth All India Dalit Jatiya Sangh Conference, on 2 February ... at 3 p.m. under the presidentship of Shriman Hinduratna Babu Raghubar Narayansinghji, Managing Director, Pacific Bank Limited Calcutta, a Vishal Hindu Dharm Sammelan will be held. At this Sammelan, there will be speeches by prominent Hindu personalities on the following topics:

‘Do you consider it necessary to have Hindu Sangathan for the protection of Hindu culture and the independence of the country? If yes, then can true Hindu Sangathan be achieved without removing the present differences based on caste?’

‘What has your group done to take forward the anti-untouchability campaign of Parm Puja Mahatma Gandhi?’...

Hoping that people will gather in large numbers to attend this meeting.

Dr. Dharmprakash
Secretary, Reception Committee

Kanhaiyalal
M.A. (Prev) Secretary

R.P. Kishore, Office Secretary

15. Babu Jagjivan Ram’s Presidential Speech at the 8th Session of the All India Depressed Classes Conference, Meerut, 1 February 1942

The National Herald, 2 February 1942.

‘We stand for the country’s independence, but at the same time we stand for our own freedom, we stand to end our social, religious and economic exploitations, and stand for equality in Hindu society’, observed Mr. Jag Jiwan Ram ... presiding over the eighth session of the All India Depressed Classes Conference this evening. Mr. Jag Jiwan Ram regretted the adamant attitude of the British Government which seemed in no mood to come to terms with the real representatives of the people. Every time the same hackneyed tone of August Offer, which had been rejected by all the parties, was harped....

Proceeding, Mr. Jag Jiwan Ram expressed the opinion that the minority communities had lost confidence in the majority community and it was for the majority community to restore that confidence by their own action. Therefore, the responsibility to solve the communal tangle falls on the majority community to a very great extent. ‘As for ourselves—the members of the scheduled castes—he said, “We may assure our countrymen that our community will never stand in the way of communal settlement by advancing unreasonable and unjust demands.”’

Concluding, Mr. Jag Jiwan Ram blamed the British Government for not including a member of the scheduled caste in the expanded Viceroy’s Executive Council and said that the only reply which could be given to such an insult was to withdraw the scheduled castes representative from the War Advisory Council and such other bodies.

16. Letter from the Secretary, Ratnagiri District Harijan Sevak Sangh, Walaval, to the Advisor to the Government of Bombay, 17 April 1942, about Attack on Mahar Houses

Home Department Special File No. 844 (IX), MSA.

Sir,

I beg to state the following for your information:

On 3rd April 1942 a brutal attack was made on a group of Mahars' houses in the Mahar-Wada of Dhamni—a village four miles from Sangameshwar on the road to Chiplun. The facts as found by representatives of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Ratnagiri, specially deputed for the purpose are:

On the day in question at about 4 P.M. some Mahar women proceeding to Kasba—on the opposite side of the river—with headloads of fuel were waylaid by one Bala Ibrahim Kapadi of Kasba, who abused them, threw down their head-loads and began making indecent overtures. The women, thereupon, beat him and leaving the head-loads, returned home. When news of the beating reached Kasba, a party of 100 to 150 Muslims of Kasba rushed to the Mahar-Wada with sticks and other implements. On seeing them coming, the inmates—men, women and children ran helter-skelter. These ruffians pursued and belaboured whom-so-ever they met. Three or four women were also criminally assaulted.

They then raided about 10–11 houses of these Mahars smashing the doors, pulling down the walls, scattered the grain, broke pots and utensils not sparing grinding stones or even drums. After these exploits causing a damage of Rs. 200/- the party left at about 7 p.m. The Police arrived on the scene at mid-night after making inquiries sent four women and a boy to the Dispensary at Deorukh.

These Mahars owing to extreme poverty are at the mercy of the Sawkars who happen in this case, to be the Muslims of Kasba who use the most unscrupulous methods in making recoveries. The women folk in particular are a special object of their attention.

It is the earnest prayer of the Harijan Sevak Sangh that the authorities concerned will not rest content with the half-hearted Police inquiry and prosecution of a few minor fry which often ends in smoke, but will bring human sympathy to bear upon a vigorous and minute investigation of a dastardly crime and do some reparation to a much harassed community.

I have the honour to be,

Sir

Yours faithfully,

Mahadeo Tukaram Walawalkar
Secretary, Ratnagiri District Harijan Sevak Sangh

17. Depressed Classes' Leader on C. Rajagopalachari's 'Bold Stand'

The Bombay Chronicle, 5 May 1942.

Poona, May 4

'The attitude of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari exemplifies the fact that without a suitable compromise between the Congress and the minorities, no National Government worth the name can be

formed in the Country' says Mr. P.N. Rajbhoj, the Depressed class leader, in the course of a statement to the press.

'The force and justice of the claims of the minorities,' Mr. Rajbhoj adds, 'are clearly brought out by the very bold stand taken by Mr. Rajagopalachari. It is true he has not referred to the Depressed class along with his support to the League scheme of Pakistan; but we have no doubt that when once his standpoint is accepted by the Congress leaders, the latter cannot logically refuse the demand of the seven crores of depressed class members for separate electorate.'

18. Viceroy's Council Reshuffle: New Members Include B.R. Ambedkar

The Bombay Chronicle, 3 July 1942.

New Delhi, July 2

It is announced that His Majesty the King has been pleased to approve the appointment of Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar ..., Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sir E.C. Benthall, Sir Jogendra Singh, Sir J.P. Srivastava,... and Khan Bahadur Sir Muhammad Usman,... to the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India.

.... Member in Charge of the Department of Labour in succession to the Hon'ble Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

19. N. Sivaraj's Presidential Address at All India Scheduled Caste Federation Conference

IAR, 1942, Vol. 2, p. 8.

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj M.L.A. (Central) in the course of his presidential address at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference [*sic*] at Nagpur, said: 'We know and feel that unless the Allies succeed in defeating the Axis, India has no chance of becoming a free country. If we now help the Allies in winning the war, I assure you that a settlement of our problem will go before the tribunal of the United Nations and will receive consideration which has not been hitherto bestowed on it by the British Government. We all wish an Allied victory.'

20. All India Scheduled Caste Federation: Formation of Working Committee, Nagpur, 19 July 1942

The Bombay Chronicle, 21 July 1942.

At today's session of the All India Depressed Classes Conference, resolutions were passed declaring that the Cripps proposals were entirely unacceptable to the Scheduled Castes, protesting against the proposals agreeing to the demand made by the Congress that the new constitution should be framed by a constituent assembly, and agreeing to the establishment of a central political organization to carry on the political movement of the Scheduled Castes.

A Working Committee of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation was constituted with Rai Bahadur N. Sivaraj, M.L.A. (Central), as President, and Messrs Rewaram Kawade, K.L. Shendre, H.L. Kosare, B.K. Gaikwad, P.N. Rajabhoj, D.G. Jadhav and others as members.

Dr. Ambedkar ... reviewed the ground from the Round Table Conference when he differed from Mr. Gandhi right down to the Cripps proposals, which he characterized as a great betrayal

of the Depressed Classes. In the future constitution that would be framed they must affirm that they were not a sub-section of the Hindu community. Their real emancipation lay in getting out of the thralldom of Hinduism; at any rate they must insist on political separation if not religious separation.

They must safeguard their position by having social, economic and political security. A separate settlement of villages for Depressed Classes must be their aim, for which a budgetary provision of Rs. 20,00,000 in each province must be allowed. Their educational grant must be fixed by the constitution so that they might have the benefit of higher education and adequate representation in the administration of the country. Further, he would like the Depressed Classes to function in the legislatures under one single organization.

Alluding to the demand of Pakistan he did not wish to be their censor but recalled how when Mr. Jinnah called his community a minority the other minorities derived strength from each other, but now that Mr. Jinnah called his community a nation his breakaway meant that they were left alone to carry on the fight. It might be that the Muslims might turn out to be the very people against whom they might have to raise the standard of revolt.

21. B.R. Ambedkar: Civil Disobedience at This Time 'Treachery to India': Telegram from Lord Linlithgow to L.S. Amery, 23 July 1942
TOP, Vol. 2, pp. 436-7.

No. 2169-S. Following from Lumley, dated July 22nd:

Begins. Ambedkar made a strong speech last night declaring civil disobedience at this time 'treachery to India' and 'playing the enemy's game' and urging all Indians as a patriotic duty 'to resist with all the power and resources at their command any attempt on the part of Congress to launch civil disobedience.'

2. He also announced that before he left for Delhi he would issue a statement explaining the line of policy which the Independent Labour Party and other allied organizations must follow. He asked his audience (of his followers) to study that statement and implicitly carry out its instructions. *Ends.*

I am asking Puckle to make special arrangements to have this statement when it appears telegraphed to U.K. and U.S.A. and feel sure that you will be able to turn it to good use.

22. Punjab Depressed Classes League's Resolution: Full Confidence in M.K. Gandhi's Leadership
The Tribune, 1 August 1942.

Lahore, July 29

The 9th annual session of the Punjab Provincial Depressed Classes' League was held in Dina Nagar in the Gurdaspur district under the presidency of Principal Ram Dass. Harijan delegates from all over the province attended the conference, which adopted a number of resolutions.

In the first resolution full confidence and satisfaction was expressed in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who was assured that they considered no sacrifice too great in the Harijan cause.

The conference rejected the decisions of the Nagpur Depressed Classes Conference and stressed that the demand for separate rights and 'bastis' for Harijans was the demand of Dr. Ambedkar's Party and Harijan masses had nothing to do with it. The conference appealed to Harijans to keep aloof from the movements which aimed at separating them from Hindus and strengthening the chains of India's slavery.

By another resolution the conference declared that the scheme of Pakistan was injurious to the interests of the nation and the country and that Harijans were prepared to sacrifice their all to oppose any scheme aiming at the vivisection of India.

In the last resolution the conference requested the Punjab Government to declare Harijans as statutory agriculturists and give them their representation in the services on the basis of their population, reserve special fund for the education of Harijans, make sweepers' post permanent, create provident Fund and give them leave with pay.

Chapter 8. Forward Bloc and the Radical Democratic Party

1. Congress Working Committee (Wardha, 13–17 January) Resolution regarding Forward Bloc

A.M. Zaidi and S.G. Zaidi, *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. 12, 1939–1946, p. 456.

The attention of the Committee was drawn to the fact that members of the Forward Bloc and the Communist Party have been carrying on for a long time anti-Congress propaganda and activities. For the Central Assembly by-election the Forward Bloc set up a candidate of their own against the Congress nominee. The Committee decided that it was open to any PCC to take disciplinary action against members of any group if their activities were against Congress policies and if they flouted Congress discipline.

2. Public Meeting of Sind Provincial Forward Bloc: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The Sind Provincial Forward Bloc held a public meeting on the 30th January with Mr. Alim T. Gidwani in the chair. Resolutions were passed protesting against the arrest of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and other Forward Bloc workers. Mr. Muhammad Amin Khoso, M.L.A., interrupted the meeting demanding that the meeting should be held under the auspices of the Radical Democratic Party. Mr. Alim T. Gidwani left the meeting but about 125 persons remained and after a short speech by Mr. Khoso who said that those who opposed the war effort were enemies of India, a resolution was adopted assuring full support to the Government in their effort.... Mr. Khoso has recently made a contribution to His Excellency's War Purposes Fund on behalf of the Communist workers of Karachi.

3. Protest against Arrest of Sarat Chandra Bose and Lala Shankar Lal: Resolutions Passed at the Sind Provincial Forward Bloc Meeting on 30 January 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

First Resolution: 'This public meeting of the citizens of Karachi, held under the auspices of the Sind Provincial Forward Bloc, Karachi strongly protests against the arrest of Sarat Chandra

Bose and his removal to Madras without any trial in the Court and demands that he should be tried in the Court and that he should be sent to Calcutta so that proper arrangements for his meals may be made.'

This resolution was moved from the chair, put to vote and carried.

Second Resolution: 'This public meeting of the citizens of Karachi, held under the auspices of the Sind Provincial Forward Bloc, Karachi strongly protests against the arrest of Lala Shankar Lal, General Secretary, All-India Forward Bloc, Delhi and his removal to some unknown place without even informing his relations and demands that his whereabouts and address should be given to his mother'.

This resolution was moved by Jagjiwan Mamotra, put to vote by the President and then passed by the audience.

Third Resolution: 'This public meeting of the citizens of Karachi, held under the auspices of the Sind Provincial Forward Bloc, Karachi, congratulates Mukundlal Sarkar and the 20 other members of the Forward Bloc for their arrest at Calcutta.'

This resolution was moved by Pandit M.S. Sharma put to vote by the President and then passed by the audience.

4. Secret and Immediate Letter No. 16/1/42, Dated 3 March 1942, from Sir Richard Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Bihar, the Central Provinces, Assam, the North-West Frontier Provinces, Orissa, Sind

GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to paragraph 2 of the Home Department letter No. 21/10/41-Poll (I) dated the 11th February, 1942, in which it was stated that the question of declaring the All-India Forward Bloc an unlawful association was engaging the attention of the Government of India. The Forward Bloc is not itself a strong organization, except in one or two Provinces, and the majority of its members are hardly to be distinguished from many of the supporters of Congress or other political parties which are opposed to Government. On the other hand, the Government of India have good reason to believe that there is a relatively small clique working inside the Bloc whose activities are of real danger to the peace of the country and who are a definite instrument of enemy intrigue. On further consideration, therefore, the Government of India would if Provincial Governments agree, drop the question of action against the Forward Bloc as a whole and concentrate on the dangerous members of the clique referred to above.

In pursuance of this line of action, the Government of India propose to issue early order for the arrest and detention under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules of the following members of the Forward Bloc:

1. Sardul Singh Caveeshar
2. Satyaranjan Bakshi
3. Amrendranath Basu.

To these three the Government of India also proposed to add

4. Sushil Kumar Bhadra
5. Anil Chandra Roy, if either of them is not convicted of the charges on which they are presently undergoing trial in Bengal.

They would also be glad if the Provincial Governments mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs would agree to take the action suggested against the individuals referred to therein....

3. The Central Provinces

H.V. Kamath, the General Secretary of the All India Forward Bloc

The Government of India understand that this individual is at present under trial in Bihar under the Defence of India Rules in connection with recent prejudicial speeches made by him. They consider that should the trial not end in a conviction and sentence of imprisonment H.V. Kamath should be arrested and detained by the Provincial Government under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules.

4. The United Provinces

Bishambar Dayal Tripathi, M.L.A.

The Government of India understand that this individual has been attempting to form a new Kisan organization within the framework of the Forward Bloc, the possibility of the employment of which for Fifth Column purposes cannot be ruled out. They would accordingly be glad if the Provincial Government would take the necessary action for his arrest and detention under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules provided that they are satisfied that the case against him is sufficiently strong.

5. Bihar

Basanta Chandra Ghose

While the Government of India are of the opinion that his activities and pro-Japanese tendencies may have been such as to render his immediate arrest and detention essential, they consider that the question whether such action against him may not shortly become necessary should be borne in mind and they would be grateful if the Provincial Government would give the matter their consideration.

6. Bengal

Sushil Kumar Bhadra and Anil Chandra Roy (See paragraph 2 above)

The Government of India would be glad if the Government of Bengal would report the results of the trials of these two persons as soon as they are concluded.

Pannalal Mitra. The Government of India understand that this person has been arrested and detained by the Provincial Government under Rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules. They consider that he should be included in the category of persons whose presence at large at the present juncture would be prejudicial to the country's defences. I am accordingly to request that the provincial Government will kindly arrange for his continued detention under

Rule 26 of the Defence of India rules, and will not release him from jail custody without prior reference to the Government of India.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Sd/-

R. Tottenham

Additional Secretary to the Government of India

5. Bihar Provincial Forward Bloc Condemns All India Kisan Council's Support for War Effort: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The working committee of the Provincial Forward Bloc has passed a resolution condemning the All India Kisan Council's resolution in support of the war effort and declaring that the Forward Bloc should be guided by the terms of the resolutions passed at the anti-compromise conference at Ramgarh. Lambodar Mukharji and Sarbanand Nissir have been busy passing resolutions and urging people to enlist in the National Defence Brigade of the Forward Bloc. Orders internment of these two agitators have since issued under the Defence of India Rules.

6. Arrest of Forward Bloc Leaders: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

With a view to checking the all-India conference of the Forward Bloc which had been announced to be held in Delhi on the 4th, 5th and 6th of April, the general secretary of the all India organization and three local workers were arrested on the 22nd March under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules. This section appears to have secured its object and the latest information is that the conference in Delhi has been abandoned.

7. Subhas Chandra Bose's Broadcast from Berlin, 13 March 1942

Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose, pp. 117–19.

No Enemy outside India's Frontiers

Friends! The fall of Singapore has been hastily followed by the collapse of other military bases of Britain's imperialistic Allies in East Asia. The Japanese capture of Rangoon has revived the hopes of freedom of the Burmese. They will again breathe a free atmosphere, just as they did when they were a free nation. The prophecy which the German Foreign Minister made, on November 26, 1939, is proving true. How prophetic were his words when he said that Britain would lose her military bases one by one! The British Empire stands threatened in every quarter. The flame of British glory is flickering. Their days are numbered.

As usual, the British have been striving desperately since the outbreak of the present hostilities to cajole other people into shedding their blood and supplying armaments to the British for the successful prosecution of the war. But their efforts have failed. They are facing disaster and disgrace on all fronts.

Since September 1939, the Indians have been entreating the British Government to apply the principles of freedom and democracy to India, and thus give practical proof of their honesty and goodwill towards them. Some Indian nationalists even went to the extent of announcing that, should the British satisfy their national aspirations, they would be prepared to help them in this war. To this appeal British statesmen paid no heed. They never gave an unambiguous reply which would have earned the goodwill of Indians. With characteristic hypocrisy and fraud, they have again made an obscure declaration.

Throughout their rule in India, the British have been seeking to create disunity among Indians. They have succeeded to some extent in this object, and, on the plea of disunity among the various sections of the people, they have consistently refused to grant self-government to India. There is no end to British intrigues. Now they are making a lot of fuss over a possible enemy invasion of India.

It has been frequently argued that India's frontiers lie on the Suez Canal and in Hong Kong. On this pretext, the British carried Indian troops to the Libyan desert and France and caused their bloodshed. In the East, the Indians were sacrificed in Hong Kong and Singapore in utter disregard of Indian wishes. This is only a mischievous invention of the British mind. India's geographical borders lie only where nature has created them. The Indians understand that they have no enemy outside the Indian frontier.

.... My Indian brothers, it is not worthwhile to hope that the British will ever be able to help you in keeping hostilities beyond the frontiers of India. Rather, they will continually undertake to destroy India, and will not desist from resorting to the 'scorched-earth' policy in our country as well. The British Empire was founded on relentless plundering of weak nations. So long as it is in their power they will persist in the exploitation of subject nations. If the Indians took it to their heart that their country should be safe from danger, their first duty would be to carry out a thorough destruction of British military objectives in India, and prevent India's raw material, wealth and youth from being harnessed by the British to their war effort.

Friends, it is crystal clear that in British decline alone lies the hope of India's independence. Every Indian who works to strengthen British hands betrays the cause of his motherland. Such a man is a traitor to India. Whoever opposes Indian patriots and sides with the British is no better than a Mir Jafar or an Umi Chand of the present generation.

Brothers and sisters, everyone of you should understand that to come to terms with the British, who are about to perish, is a ridiculous commitment in the eyes of the world. Churchill has recently announced the possibility of granting Dominion Status to India as soon as it is feasible. He has commanded Cripps to go out to India in order to bring together the various Indian political parties, and to find out what measure of power should be granted to the Indians under the present circumstances. No sane Indian can be pleased with this latest British offer. Today, no Indian is prepared to trust empty British promises of freedom after the war....

.... The famous Tripartite Pact has been concluded to put an end to tyrannical British imperialism. The parties to this pact are our comrades. It is absolutely ridiculous to say that the combination of Axis Powers constitutes a menace to the freedom of India. The facts are quite different. I know these nations fully well, and I can assure you that they have great sympathy

for the cause of our freedom. If anyone is doubtful on this point, he may be reminded of the recent statement of General Tojo, the Japanese Premier. Let me hope that my compatriots will no longer entertain any doubts about their goodwill towards us and yield to false Anglo-American propaganda. Indians should be delighted with the brilliant victories which the Japanese are scoring against their enemies. The day when justice and equality will assert themselves is not far off. When that time comes, then alone will Indians be able to prosper and flourish in an atmosphere of freedom and justice.

Long Live Revolution!

8. Report on Indian Independence Conference Held at Tokyo from 28 to 30 March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 1/3/1942, NAI.

The Indian Independence Conference was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Rash Behari Bose, at Sanno Hotel, Tokyo, Japan from Saturday, the 28th March, 1942 to Monday the 30th March, 1942 at which the following representatives were present:

1. Mr. Rash Behari Bose
2. Mr. R. Ragvan
3. Mr. K. P.K. Menon
4. Mr. S.C. Goho
5. Mr. Mohan Singh
6. Mr. N.S. Gill
7. Mr. G.M. Khan
8. Mr. M.R. Mullick
9. Mr. O. Osman
10. Mr. Piara Singh
11. Mr. D.S. Deshpande
12. Mr. A.M. Nair
13. Mr. C. Lingham
14. Mr. B.D. Gupta
15. Mr. S.N. Sen
16. Mr. L.R. Miglani
17. Mr. Rajah Singh
18. Mr. K.V. Narain

....

Agenda No. 1.

Attitude of the Indian regarding this war was then taken up and the following resolution was read and unanimously passed;

Resolution

Whereas we believe that this war of greater East Asia is sure to destroy British influence and power in Asia, and whereas we believe that this is the golden opportunity for the realization of Indian National Goal which is nothing but complete independence; and whereas depending upon the self-conscious efforts of various Asiatic nations, a new Asia is sure to rise as a result

of this war. We hereby resolve that we must join hands with Japan in accordance with the declared policy of the Imperial Japanese Government, made through premier General Tojo on the occasion of the fall of Singapore.

Declaration of Premier General Tojo

'It is golden opportunity for India having as it does several thousand years of history and splendid cultural tradition, and continue as before to be beguiled by the British cajolery and manipulation ... and I cannot but fear that an opportunity for the renaissance of the Indian people would be forever lost'.

Agenda No. II. Complete Independence of India

1. Ideology of Independence

After discussion in which all members participated, it was resolved that UNITY, FAITH, SACRIFICE, shall be the motto of the Independence movement.

2. Nature and Times of the independence

The meaning of the complete Independence of India was fully clarified and the following resolution was unanimously passed. 'That Independence complete and free from foreign domination, interference and/or control of whatever nature, shall be the object of the movement and in the opinion of the conference now is the right time to achieve the object and secure such Independence.'

Agenda No. III.

To spread Independence movement to East Asia and in India, it was unanimously passed to act as follows.

East Asia. By Broadcast, leaflets, Pamphlets, infiltration. Establishment of contacts with Indian leaders and organization.

Organisation

i. Formation of local branches or leagues, for the duration of war, President to be elected by committee from at the meeting of the representatives of the place. Vacancy on the committee to be filled by the majority votes of the committee.

President not removable without the vote of the three-fourths of the members of the committee.

ii. Central. The president of the various local bodies together with the representatives of the Indian Army in East Asia, which representatives shall not exceed the total number representatives who will lay down the general policy of action and elect a COUNCIL OF ACTION consisting of the President and four staff members, of whom at least two shall be from the military.

The Council of Action shall be responsible for the working out of the general policy and in such working out they shall appoint departmental officers for the purpose of administration....

Requests to the Imperial Japanese Government

1. It is resolved that, in further clarification of the attitude of Japan towards India, the Imperial Japanese Government be requested to make formal declaration to the effect.

- (a) That Japan is willing and ready to give all possible help to India to sever its connection from British Empire to attain complete Independence.
 - (b) That on such severance of India from the British Empire Japan would recognize the full sovereignty of India on attaining Independence.
 - (c) That absolute independence of India would be guaranteed by the Imperial Japanese Government.
 - (d) That the Imperial Japanese Government of Japan would exercise its influence with other powers and induce them to recognize the INDEPENDENCE and sovereignty of India.
 - (e) That the framing of the future constitution of India will be left entirely to the representatives of the people of India.
2. It was also resolved to request the Imperial Japanese Government to render such financial help for the successful carrying out of our object as may be required from time to time on the distinct understanding that any such help is to be treated as a loan to be repaid to Japan by the National Government of Independent India when it comes into being.
 3. To give all facilities for propaganda, travel Transport, communications, within the area under the control of the Imperial Japanese Government, in the manner and to the extent requested by the council of action, and also all facilities to come into contact with the National Leaders, the worker, and organization in India.
 4. To clarify the position of Indian troops now under control in occupied territories.
 5. To recognize and facilitate the use of the present National flag of India in all territories under the Imperial Government of Japan.
 6. To consult in all matters of administration affecting the Indian community the Indian independence Leagues of the respective places and places where there are no league recognized leaders of community approved by the league branch nearest to such places....

Appendix B

1. Specific instructions should be given to any troops attacking India to refrain themselves and to stop others from destroying places of worship belonging to the various religious bodies in order to avoid any sort of friction liable to be caused by such sabotage acts.
2. As soon as possible the property of the Indian Government and other rich Indians considered pro-British including the Indian Princes should be placed under the joint control and custody of the occupying Indian troops to avoid embezzlement or looting, etc; so that on expiration of the war the Indian Government may be in the position to cover up the expense.
3. In all kinds of Government affairs, External or Internal, the Religious leaders should not be consulted and their membership should never be taken in various states Councils.
4. Compulsory education, irrespective of male and female sect, should be started as soon as possible on realization of the independence of India.
5. Various societies opened in different cities found not in favour of achieving complete Independence of India and not co-operating with the main body, should be dissolved as soon as possible.

6. Able and patriotic volunteers should be enlisted from every part of East Asia including Shanghai, Hong Kong, Java, Sumatra, etc. so that they can enjoy equal privileges in order that they also partake in serving their motherland.
7. All Indian Nationals, irrespective of their financial standing class or religion, should be treated on equal footing in the matter of state affairs.
8. In war time just as women in all countries of the world are allowed to take full share in rendering their best service for the freedom of their respective countries, similarly Indian women are also anxious to fulfil their duties, in every possible way for the freedom of our country. But the British region, the women of India have not been given the same power and freedom which the men have been so far, as a result of whom women in India have not been allowed to take part in Government affairs. In order to rise them to the same standard of freedom as the men we should allow them the discretion of taking active part in serving our mother land even against the wishes of their parents, husbands and other relatives supposed to be pro-British. Military training should be considered as compulsory part of education.

9. The Congress in Defence of Subhas Chandra Bose: Letter to the Editor, *The Statesman*, Wardha, 19 March 1942, Drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 495–6

Sir,

In your leading article appearing in *The Statesman* of the 15th March you have made a very grave allegation. You state that 'intimate friends of Mr. Gandhi and members of the Working Committee of Congress have told us that they had evidence that Mr. Subhas Bose received funds from the enemy when he was in this country.'

We have had our differences with Mr. Subhas Bose and for many years he has not been in the Congress and has in fact opposed it. But the charge made in your editorial is so extraordinary that I am unable to believe it. I have consulted all my colleagues of the Working Committee who are here at present and they have also expressed their astonishment at this surprising allegation. Whatever our differences with Mr. Subhas Bose in the past or in the present, we cannot imagine that the charges, allegations you make can be true. In fairness to all concerned will you please let me know the basis of your allegation?

Yours sincerely,
 General Secretary,
 A.I.C.C.

10. Forward Bloc Executive Committee Meeting in Bombay: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of April 1942
 GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The Executive Committee of the All-India Forward Bloc met in Bombay on April 4th, 5th and 6th under the presidentship of R.S. Ruikar. Eleven resolutions in all were passed at the

meeting, the most important among them being the one authorizing the president to take all necessary action to carry on the work of the All-India organization and to allow a president of a provincial organization to function whenever desirable and necessary. By another resolution the Committee disapproved of the proposals brought by Sir Stafford Cripps and appealed to the public in general and the political parties in particular to reject them. By two other resolutions the Committee decided to observe the 1st May as 'All-India Soviet Day' and opposed the application of the 'scorched earth' policy to India....

The Bombay Provincial Forward Bloc held a public meeting in Bombay on April 5th. It was attended by about 1000 persons and presided over by R.S. Ruikar. The president, Bidesh alias Tatya Tukaram Kulkarni, Joint Secretary of the All-India Forward Bloc, and two others made speeches in support of two resolutions, one congratulating Y.J. Meherally on his election as Mayor of Bombay and the other expressing the opinion that there should be no compromise between Indians and British Imperialism because it would only lead them into the war and be harmful to their freedom.

As the recent record of Bidesh alias Tatya Tukaram Kulkarni was particularly sinister and as he was active in the neighbourhood of Belgaum, in which district he was mainly responsible for the machinations of the Forward Bloc, an order was issued on April 8th, under Defence of India Rule 3-26, directing that he should be detained pending further orders.

11. Forward Bloc Eager to Strive for Independence of India: Letter from Girdhar Thaker, Secretary, Bombay Forward Bloc, to Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 April 1942

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 99, NMML.

Dear Panditji,

I am authorized by the Executive Committee of the Bombay Provincial Forward Bloc to hand over this letter to you personally.

We are painfully forced by your oft and oft statements, press conference reports and lastly by your speech at Calcutta on the 19th instant leveling against the Forward Bloc charges uncalled for, to write this letter.

Dear Panditji, fortunately for India except for those who strive for lucrative ministerial positions the Cripps Mission has ended in a thorough failure and it has failed justly. Had it succeeded, with our own peoples help Cripps would have been successful in strengthening the hands of slavery and we cannot say with how many Jallianwala baghs we might have been rewarded after the war for our enthusiasm and sacrifice after its prosecution. It is too fresh in our memory their past promises and the reward for our efforts in the last war, the Jallianwala bagh tragedy.

India today looks upon you to be our saviour and liberator. Blindly men, women and children have clung to your stainless garb; so lead them to the right path, do not confuse them or do not let them go astray. God forbid the day to dawn when Indians, your ardent followers make you stand on a pedestal and demand an explanation for the wavering policy which you have adopted.

.... In that historic session of the Indian National Congress at Tripuri in 1939 the Congress High Command consisting of you unjustly threw Subhas Babu away. Undaunted by your gross

betrayal he appealed fervently to the people to make a final effort to free India from British Imperialism by presenting the Government with an ultimatum for six months, the Government failing to comply with our demand to start on the next day of the expiry of the ultimatum a country wide mass movement to tear the garments of slavery. But none of you realized the truth, the sincere and farsighted appeal of Subhas Babu. Had you followed his advise the fate of our country would have been different and India today would have been a free nation to deal with any aggression or calamity with confidence. But you preferred to follow Mahatma Gandhi and take the doubtful alternative of moving hither and thither issuing inconsistent statements and counter-statements. Perhaps you may realize when it is too late that to mix saintliness and truth with politics will be a pitiable tragedy.

.... Let us assure you, Sir, that the Forward Bloc ever since its inception has never busied itself in propaganda against the Congress, but has always stressed the necessity of strengthening the Indian National Congress and working under its proud banner. The Forward Blocists have ever been eager to strive for the independence of India even at the cost of our lives and our beloved leader Subhas Babu was not slow in placing at the disposal of Mahatmaji the entire rank and file of the Forward Bloc for the satyagraha which was started by the Mahatma in 1940, which offer was regrettable rejected by Gandhiji. This single fact alone is enough to convince you of the bona-fides of the Forward Bloc and their adherence to the Congress and the high ideal it has placed before the country ... Look at the response to the clarion call of Subhas Babu on the 6th of April 1940 for Purna Swaraj when thousands from all parts of India irrespective of communal differences sacrificed their everything and courted imprisonment. The present Bengal Ministry is a practical manifestation of how Hindu-Muslim unity could be achieved and today it stands to the credit of the Forward Bloc.

In light of the facts mentioned above how can you say that the Forward Bloc is existent only in Bengal and the name of the Bloc is not heard in other parts of India? Today the Forward Bloc workers do not in pomp and pageantry indulge in issuing statements and making speeches from platforms but are carrying on undaunted by the betrayals of many of their comrades and the brutal repression of the Government the struggle for India's redemption. Today the Forward Bloc exists in the heart of every Indian and we shall not fail to take them to their goal....

.... No nation has achieved freedom by begging and it is no time when leaders like you and Mr. Rajagopalachari should waste your time by drawing an imaginary picture of Japanese aggression. You conveniently forget to fight an enemy which is already in your soil and demand your country men to be prepared to fight the Japanese. What are we to defend? Slavery, starvation and repression? Give the call to your followers to fight British Imperialism which is sucking our blood every minute at this right moment and drive them away. We assure you we staunch and sincere Forward Blocists will fall to one man at the altar of freedom and defend our country from any aggression by any power whatsoever....

Yours sincerely

Sd/- Girdhar Thaker
Secretary

N.B. We solicit an early reply.

G.T.

12. Propaganda Leaflets of Forward Bloc: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... The followers and admirers of Subhas Chandra Bose are active and propaganda leaflets, well printed and effectively got up, have been widely circulated not only in Calcutta but also in distant parts of the Province. These purport to be issued by the 'Indian Revolutionary People's Party'; accept the fact that Subhas Chandra Bose is with the enemy, bitterly criticize 'the English' for having involved India in war, being unable to defend her and intending at the first opportunity to run away and leave her to her fate; hint at the desirability of an independent peace; call upon the people to look to the 'dawn in the East'; emphasise that, whereas there is nothing to fear from Japan, the Government of which 'have many times declared that it is their sole policy to recognize the complete independence of India', the War 'affords a perfect opportunity for the fulfillment of Indian hopes and aspirations'; and call for preparation for revolution in compliance with the directions of their 'leader' (i.e., Subhas Bose) in order to overthrow British imperialism, the struggle against which is represented as the only relevant and important thing in present conditions.

.... The *Forward Bloc* is busy organizing in Contai a *Seva Dal* which those in charge intend to use, if necessary, in support of the Japanese and in any case against the 'British'.

13. Pamphlet Issued by Revolutionary People's Party, Sympathetic to Forward Bloc, Titled 'Jago Biplabi Dal'

GOI Home Political File No. 37/6/42, NAI.

The war has drawn to our doors. Next will come a storm. There will be an uproar of wails, and waves of blood will flow, to every corner. But what are you doing? Flood is raging everywhere, pool of blood is all around, and you are dozing under the intoxication of opium and dreaming of household affairs. You, the weak and infirm, just open your eyes and look around. The dacoits have raided your house—this barbarous dacoity and plundering have been going on for the last two hundred years. Millions of lives you have sacrificed in the last War and crores of rupees you have contributed. But no more. The trumpet of time has blown, history has recalled itself to-day and the days of the British, the enemy of civilization, have come to be numbered to-day. To-day they will have to pay the price of their shameless oppression for the last two hundred years. The British Imperialism which is maintaining its existence by sucking the blood of India is tottering to-day. Do you not see? Do you not hear?... The critical moment for the liberation of India is drawing near. Be ready for the critical moment. Shake off the age-long lethargy. Organise parties in villages, towns and everywhere. Work day and night to gather people. Organise secret Panchayats—ask them to be ready—Let all pull together—the peasants of the fields, coolies of the factories, employees of the offices, students of schools and colleges to bring nearer that splendid critical moment of India. Never did come such a day in the luck of India. Violent rolling waves will dash in from outside and with the booming sounds of vibrant uproar of the waves of water, will burst out terrific storm of devastation from all sides.

The rebellious revolutionary party wake up this time.

Yonder looks the light in the east. Let victory be to revolution. Let victory be to the fight for the liberty of India.

Long live Subhas Babu

Revolutionary People's Party

14. Forward Bloc Becoming Cautious in the Light of Recent Arrests;
Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the First Half of
April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Owing to the recent arrest of prominent Forward Bloc members and the fear that more arrests are to follow, Provincial Branches have, it is understood, been informed secretly that in the event of their not receiving any further instructions from the Head Office, they should abstain from taking any active measures. There has been a split in the local Forward Bloc over the apology offered by Asoke Das, organizing Secretary of the Orissa Forward Bloc, in a recent case against him under the Defence of India Rules for a prejudicial speech on 'Independence' day.

15. Public Meeting of Sind Provincial Forward Bloc: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Sind for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... The Sind Provincial Forward Bloc held a public meeting on the 31st March to rejoice at the contradiction of the news of the death of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. The meeting was attended by about 500 persons and the speeches delivered were strongly anti-British and anti-war.

16. R.S. Ruikar's Activities: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Central
Provinces and Berar for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

R.S. Ruikar, president of the All-India Forward Bloc, has been active since his return from his visits to the United Provinces. He addressed meetings in the Chhindwara district and at Burhanpur and Amraoti, and at one or two other places.... His visit to the Chhindwara district was in connection with the question of the grant of dearness allowance to workers in one of the mines of Shaw Wallace's collieries. His visit was followed by a strike lasting three days in spite of the advice which he gave to the miners not to strike but to press their case by other means.

17. Subhas Chandra Bose's Poster Banned in Bombay

The Times of India, 19 May 1942.

The Government of Bombay have prohibited further publication, sale and distribution of the poster containing an outline of India encircling a picture of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose and containing in Hindi, the words *Azad Hind Zindabad. Hamara Taranhar* (Long Live Free India, Our Liberator) and in English, the words *Our Liberator Subhas Babu Zindabad*, under the Defence of

India rules as, in their opinion, it is a prejudicial report. Government have declared all copies of the poster, wherever found, to be forfeited by His Majesty.

One hundred and thirty-eight copies of the banned Subhas Bose poster were seized by the Bombay C.I.D. when they raided the office of the Bombay Forward Bloc on Saturday afternoon. Mr. Girdhar Thakkar, Secretary of the Bombay Forward Bloc, and Mr. Gaurishankar Bhat were arrested in this connection, under the Defence of India Rules. They were allowed bail by the Presidency Magistrate ... on Monday....

18. Refusal to Dissolve Delhi Provincial Forward Bloc: Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of May 1942

Home Political File, 18/5/42, FR for Delhi, NAI.

Local Forward Bloc workers have refused to comply with an order dissolving the Delhi Provincial Forward Bloc issued by R.S. Ruikar, the acting President of the All India Forward Bloc.

19. Forward Bloc to Open Regular Branch Office in Karachi: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

It is reported that the Forward Bloc contemplates opening a regular branch office in Karachi. Tickets with some resemblance to one rupee and ten rupee notes and bearing the photograph of Subhas Chandra Bose have been issued by Alim T. Gidwani. They appear to be receipts for contributions to the Forward Bloc Swaraj Fund.

20. Excerpts from Louis Fischer's Interview with M.K. Gandhi about His Stand on Subhas Chandra Bose, 6 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 438–9

I said, I would like to talk to him for a few moments about Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian leader who had escaped to Axis territory. I told Gandhi that I was rather shocked when I heard that he had sent a telegram of condolence to Bose's mother on the receipt of the report, since proved false, that Bose had died in an airplane accident.

G. Do you mean because I had responded to news that proved to be false?

L.F. No, but that you regretted the passing of a man who went to Fascist Germany and identified himself with it.

G. I did it because I regard Bose as a patriot of patriots. He may be misguided. I think he is misguided. I have often opposed Bose. Twice I kept him from becoming president of Congress. Finally he did become president, although my views often differed from him. But suppose he had gone to Russia or to America to ask for aid for India. Would that have made it better?

L.F. Yes, of course. It does make a difference to whom you go.

G. I do not want help from anybody to make India free. I want India to save herself....

L.F. This is where, as I told you the other day, we must agree to differ. I find the concentration of Indians on problems of their freedom to the exclusion of social problems a disappointment

and a shortcoming. Bose is a young man with a propensity for dramatic action, and were he to succumb in Germany to the lure of Fascism and return to India and make India free but Fascist, I think you would be worse off than under British rule.

G. There are powerful elements of Fascism in British rule, and in India these are the elements which we see and feel every day. If the British wish to document their right to win the war and make the world better, they must purify themselves by surrendering power in India. Your President talks about the Four Freedoms. Do they include the freedom to be free? We are asked to fight for democracy in Germany, Italy and Japan. How can we say we haven't got it ourselves?

21. Express Letter from E. Conran-Smith, Secretary to the Government of India, to All Provincial Governments and Chief Commissioners, Dated 11 June 1942, regarding Firm Action against the Forward Bloc
GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

The Government of India propose to publish on 20th June a new Defence Rule 27 a copy of which is enclosed for your information, together with copy of a press Note explaining its object, which will issue simultaneously....

2. We had in mind particularly the Forward Bloc, the connection of whose leaders with the enemy is well-known and the pro-enemy activities of whose adherents have been widespread and have given particular cause for anxiety in the east of the country more directly threatened by Japanese attack. It is realized that the Forward Bloc is not a coherent organization and is, perhaps more a platform than a Party. For this reason and for the reasons given in Home Department letter No.16/1/42—Political (1) dated 3rd March, 1942, we had for some time contented ourselves with action against the more important individual members of the Bloc. We feel, however, that to allow the Forward Bloc to continue as a legal organization may give a wrong impression and may have already given rise in some quarters to the belief that Government have not the power or the energy to stamp out all activities which are prejudicial to the Allied cause. Firm action against such organizations as the Forward Bloc, in addition to suppressing a positive danger, may therefore have a beneficial effect on public morale. The Government of India accordingly proposes simultaneously with the issue of the new Rule to make an order there under notifying the Forward Bloc....

3. We propose to detain Shilbhadra Yajee, M.L.A. of Bihar under Defence Rule 26 (1) (b) and a Central Government order against him is enclosed. We are informed, however, that Shilbhadra Yajee has gone underground. We attach considerable importance to his early arrest and Provincial Government is requested to make every effort to effect it.

4. The Government of India view with concern the delay in the proceedings against H.V. Kamath, who has been on bail since 27th February 1942. They have decided therefore that he should be detained under Defence Rule 26 (1) (b) and a Central Government order against him is accordingly enclosed. It is requested that the case against him should be dropped and that arrangements should be made to have this order served simultaneously with other action taken by the Provincial Government against Forward Bloc, on its notification, paragraph 2 above.

Sd/-

Secretary to the Government of India

22. Notification, Dated 20 June 1942, about the Forward Bloc
GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

New Delhi, the 20th June 1942

Notification

Whereas the Central Government is satisfied with respect to the organization known as the All India Forward bloc that the persons in control thereof have had associations with persons concerned in the Government of States at war with His Majesty and that there is danger of the utilization of the said organization for purposes prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order and the efficient prosecution of the war.

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-rule (1) of Rule 27A of the Defence of India Rules, the Central Government is pleased to direct that the said rule shall apply to the said organization.

SD. E. CONRAN-SMITH

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

23. Secret Note from the Commissioner of Police, Bombay,
to the Secretary to the Government of Bombay: All India
Forward Bloc—An Unlawful Association
GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

Sir,

With reference to your Express Letter No. S.D.-2316, dated the 20th June 1942, I have the honour to inform you that the office of the Bombay Provincial Forward Bloc, situated in room No. 14 on the first floor of Hansraj Damodar New Trust Building at Kennedy Bridge, was searched on the 23rd June 1942 and sealed after taking possession of the documents connected with the Association.

1. The room was rented in the name of Girdhar Thakkar, who was the Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Forward Bloc, who is, at present, under trial at Allahabad for an objectionable speech. Since his departure, the rent for the month of May has fallen in arrears. The Trustees have served a notice, to vacate the room by the end of June, on Bhupendra Motilal Patel, who resided at the premises as the Acting Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Forward Bloc. The latter, however, did not desire to continue to work in the Forward Bloc office, and submitted his resignation to Mr. R.S. Ruikar, the President of the All-India Forward Bloc, a few days ago, as he does not wish to associate with the Forward Bloc any longer.

2. In the circumstances, I suggest that the office room be made over to the Trustees of the building as there is no reasonable ground to believe that it is likely to be used as the office of the Forward Bloc again....

Your obedient servant,

Sd/-

For Commissioner of Police, Bombay

24. All India Forward Bloc Declared Unlawful: R.S. Ruikar's Strong Protest, 24 June 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

I am not surprised at the action of the Government of India in declaring the All India Forward Bloc an unlawful organization. The atmosphere was thick with such rumours for the last few days and the present action of the government of India has only proved that these rumours were correct.

That the Government of India should have been driven to amend even the all pervading and powerful Defence of India Act to declare the All India Forward Bloc as unlawful, only shows that the Government of India has been driven to a difficult straight [sic] in declaring the All India Forward Bloc as an unlawful organization.

The alleged reasons given by the Government of India in declaring the All India Forward Bloc as unlawful are extremely phantastic [sic] and totally incorrect....

I am only sorry to find that the Government of India should at this critical time adopt methods which run counter to all the fair and noble traditions of Democracy and Freedom and only tend to alienate India and England and to mar all chances of an understanding between India and England.

I will only appeal to my countrymen and the public not to be prejudiced by such Executive fiats of the Government of India but to suspend their judgment till such time as the Government of India adopts the straight and open course of proving its charges before an impartial and independent judicial tribunal.

So far as I am personally concerned, I challenge the Government of India to prosecute me openly in a Law Court and to prove that I as the head of the All India Forward Bloc have been responsible for any of the charges the Government of India has laid against the All India Forward Bloc....

Sd/-

R.S. Ruiker

Walker Road,
Nagpur City.
Dated 24th June 42

25. From F.E. Sharp, DIG, CID, Province of Bombay, to Home Secretary, Government of Bombay, 24 June 1942, about Forward Bloc Offices

Home Department Special Branch File No. 1023-A, MSA.

Sir,

.... Reports which have now been received show that the only Branch Office located in this Province is at Belgaum. This is the Karnatak Forward Bloc office and is situated in the south-east room on the second floor of House No. 3460, Samadevigalli. There appear to be no funds either in the name of the Office itself or of R.A. Mandgi who is the dictator.

I myself do not think that any purpose will be gained by notifying this Office under 17-A of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, since the Forward Bloc movement is throughout the Province practically defunct and activities in the Belgaum Office have ceased since Bidesh T. Kulkarni was arrested in April and R.A. Mangdi came near to prosecution in May.

This Branch Office was it seems closed on or about 13th May after R.A. Mangdi had come in possession of some 200 posters which were subsequently proscribed by Government. He has styled himself as the dictator since the office was closed and such records as there were have been removed to an unknown place....

26. From R.S. Ruiker to Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member,
Government of India, 8 July 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 16/1/42, NAI.

Dear Sir,

I have to draw your attention to the most serious injustice which has been done to me personally and the All India Forward Bloc by the Government of India in declaring it an unlawful organization.

In this connection I am enclosing for your information a statement issued by me immediately after the declaration of the All India Forward Bloc as an unlawful organization.

The main reason given by the Government of India in declaring the All India Forward Bloc as unlawful is 'that persons in control of it have had associations with persons concerned in the Governments of States at War with His Majesty'. As I happened to be the President of the All India Forward Bloc after the arrest and detention without trial, of Sirdar Sardul Singh Caveeshar i.e. from March 1942 till such time as the All India Forward Bloc was declared unlawful and after April 1942, in complete and dictatorial charge of All India Forward Bloc, I emphatically deny the correctness of this allegation; and in fairness to me and my other colleagues, I strongly urge upon you and the Government of India, to lay before the public any proofs which you have got to prove the contrary.

Further, in this connection, I have to point out to you that the aim and object of the All India Forward Bloc under its very constitution is the establishment of a Socialist State in India. From time to time in our Working Committee Meetings and in our Conferences, we have passed resolutions strongly opposing Fascism and all foreign aggression in India. When Generalissimo Chang Kai-Shek—the great leader of China, visited India I on behalf of the All India Forward Bloc sent him a letter of welcome, expressing our full sympathy with China in her present struggle for freedom, on the 1st of May 1942 under the instructions, the All India Soviet Day was celebrated by the Forward Bloc all over India. In a recent statement issued by me, I had appealed to all our Branches to cooperate with Government in the 'Grow More Food Campaign'. Under these circumstances, I hope you will agree with me that the charge leveled against me and my organization is wholly unjustified and extremely unfair.

So far as my personal opinions are concerned, I am still a member of the India People's Soviet Aid Committee and also a Member of the Friends of Soviet Union, Nagpur.

I have, therefore, strongly to urge upon you and the Government of India, either to place the evidence it has got in its possession before a judicial tribunal to prove the charge that has been leveled against me and my organization or in fairness to me and my organization withdraw the ban which has been imposed upon the All India Forward Bloc.

I hope you will kindly send your reply to the later and let me know what action you and the Government of India is pleased to take in this connection.

Yours truly,

Sd/-

R.S. Ruiker

27. From Secretary, Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, 22 July 1942, about Forward Bloc Leader Trying to Enroll in Congress as Primary Member
AICC Papers, F. No. P-12/1942-5, NMML.

Dear Friend,

Recently Mr. Subedar has tried to get himself enrolled as a primary member in Saugor. The Saugor District Congress Committee has taken objection and wishes to know the position. Mr. Subedar did not resign from the membership of the Assembly as directed by the Congress. This fact complicates the position. Otherwise as more than a year has passed since his expulsion he has the right to get himself enrolled as a primary member. After the formation of the Forward Bloc he became the Organising Secretary of the Provincial Forward Bloc and is on its All India Body as its member. Some months back he issued leaflets exhorting people to join a volunteer organization opposed to the Mahakoshal Rakshak Dal formed by the Official Congress.

Please let us know your decision as we have to issue instructions to the District Congress Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Secretary

28. R.S. Ruikar's Plea to Stand by Congress
The Bombay Chronicle, 3 August 1942.

Nagpur (By Mail)

Mr. R.S. Ruikar, former President of the All-India Trade Union Congress in the course of a press statement says:-

Whatever may be the attitude of Mahatma Gandhi towards Subhas Chandra Bose or the A.I.F. Bloc, I appeal to my erstwhile colleagues of the Forward Bloc, to the millions of down-trodden, oppressed and poverty-stricken workers and peasants of India, to our youths and students to close up our ranks and stand united behind the Indian National Congress.

29. M.N. Roy: 'The War Has Reached Our Doors', 11 January 1942
IAR, 1942, Part 1, p. 34.

Mr. M.N. Roy observed at a rally of the Radical Democratic Party in Calcutta: 'At last the war has reached our doors. It is no longer a distant rumbling. It is foolish even now to maintain

that we can be indifferent to it, regarding it as a great show which we can only watch. Before long it may penetrate our hearths and homes.'

30. RDP Activities in Karachi: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Radical Democratic Party celebrated India Defence Week commencing on the 26th April. Street propaganda was carried out and five meetings were held. The speakers stressed the need for fighting Fascism and Nazism, supported the scorched earth policy, demanded arms from Government for the protection of the public in times of danger and exhorted the audience to raise volunteer corps in their respective localities.

31. Pro-war and Anti-fascist Meeting by RDP: Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Radical Democratic People's Party continued its activities in aid of the war effort and anti-Fascist propaganda. It organized in all 53 meetings, most of which were held in Sholapur. The speakers at these meetings urged upon the people to co-operate with Government in destroying Fascism and to disbelieve false rumours.

Chapter 9. The Communal Situation

1. Ban on Bhagalpur Session of Hindu Mahasabha: Fortnightly Report for Madras Province for the Second Half of December 1941

GOI Home Political File No. 18/12/41, NAI.

The ban on the Bhagalpur Session of the Hindu Mahasabha has been condemned in many references in the local nationalist press and at public meetings held in Madras City and in a number of mofussil stations. The meetings in Vellore and Madras attracted crowds of about 1,000 and 600 respectively but elsewhere the gatherings were small. Local Hindus of all political persuasions seem generally to agree that the action taken by the Bihar Government was unwarranted and most unwise, and prominent local Liberals have been particularly outspoken in their criticisms.

'The Hindu' of 3rd January expresses the view that the Communique issued by the Bihar Government explaining their action in prohibiting the Hindu Mahasabha session is not convincing. The Government, it is stated, have obviously allowed administrative convenience to over-ride fundamental civic rights.

2. Release of Hindu Mahasabha Leaders, 5 January 1942

IAR, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 32.

Savarkar was released from Gaya Central Jail, where he was detained for 11 days in connection with the Bhagalpur session of the Mahasabha.

Dr. B.S. Moonje, Mr. N.C. Chatterjee, Bhai Parmanand, Padmaraj Jain, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Mr. Ashutosh Lahiry and other workers of the Hindu Mahasabha, numbering about 400, were also released from Central Jail, Bhagalpur.

3. Ghanshyamdas Birla to Jawaharlal Nehru, 13 Jan 1942, on the Communal Problem

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 1, NMML.

My dear Panditji,

.... While you were in gaol, I was seriously thinking of writing to you about the communal problem. Then after drafting it, I dropped the idea. Don't you think that we must take up the question with greater determination? I cannot visualize how India can get freedom without unity. Although the third party is exploiting the situation, it cannot be said that the problem

does not exist. I don't think it will be very helpful simply to condemn 'Pakistan'. It is very difficult to see the objection to any separation if the Muslims, as a community, really want it.

Any partner in a business, if he is not satisfied with the partnership, I suppose, has a right to demand separation. The separation, of course, has to be on an equitable basis: but I cannot conceive how anybody could object to it. It is no doubt a very gigantic affair and may not, perhaps, in practice, be found an easily workable proposition. But it is all the more necessary then that we should not show our reluctance in offering the solution on which the Muslims insist. I would, of course, make a condition that they will get only what is their due and, when we disagree, a machinery, constituted for the purpose, will decide about the alignment of the new frontier and the exchange of populations if that be necessary. As you know, on a small scale, this has been done in Turkey in the past.

If I were a Muslim, I would not accept Pakistan, because the separate Muslim India will be a very poor State, having no iron and no coal. But that is a lookout of the Muslims themselves. I have no doubt in my mind that, if you offered Pakistan, the Muslims would never accept it. But whether they want it or not, our opposition to it has only created a thirst among the Muslims to have it. I am writing this only for your consideration.

I have no doubt that you have already, in your mind, analysed the pros and cons of the problem. But so far, somehow or other, I have not come across any very strong argument against the separation....

I hope you are keeping good health.

Ghanshyamdas

4. Inayatullah Khan or Allama Mashraqi, the Khaksar Leader, Was Released from Jail on 18 January 1942: A Communiqué from New Delhi

IAR, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 36.

'In view of a statement issued by Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqui instructing his followers to abandon the militant side of the Khaksar movement for the duration of the war, the Government of India have issued orders releasing him from custody but restricting his residence for the present to the Madras Presidency.'

5. Note from Inayatullah Khan to the Superintendent, Penitentiary, Madras, 17 January 1942

G.O. No. 750 Public 1942 from Tamil Nadu State Archives (henceforth TNSA).

Please communicate to the Government of India most urgently that in order to expedite to the utmost the settlement of the Khaksar question with them it is necessary that the negotiations should continue after my release as before through the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government and that they should continue to be telegraphic and telephonic as before. I request that the Government agree to this at once as I propose to take up the question of settlement with the Government side by side with the consultations with the Khaksars in order to save time.



6. Syed Mahmud to Jawaharlal Nehru, 25 January 1942, about His Pamphlet on 'Hindu-Muslim' Problem

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 97, NMML.

My dear Jawahar,

.... (3) I left the pamphlet on 'Hindu-Muslim' problem for you to read and give your suggestions.... I have been waiting for a year to show it to you. It has become a little out of date.... As to its cultural portion it is alright but the political portion the Congress should come to terms with the League, is not possible as I have come to know definitely that Mr. Jinnah wants to retain the British rule in India. I propose to say it in the preface. Even then I want to retain that portion as I propose to follow it up, if my health and finances allow it, with a vigorous work among the Mussalmans. The publication of this pamphlet will help me in my work.... After the revelation of Mr. Jinnah's intention it became necessary to break his position by showing him up. But this cannot be done by sitting idle and hoping against hope.

Musslamans do not generally like his condition ... that Congress should go to him as a Hindu body. The impossibility of this position should be brought before them and then it should be proved to them that it is not the Congress but Mr. Jinnah who does not want a rapprochement. After this it will not be difficult to break his apparently impregnable position that it cannot be done directly or by sitting quietly.

You may regard the entire Hindu-Muslim question as foolish and not worthy of any notice, but I cannot so regard it as I do not want the Mussalmans to be annihilated which they are sure to be if they persist in their present foolish attitude.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
Syed Mahmud

7. Jawaharlal Nehru to Syed Mahmud, 2 February 1942: Jinnah Puts the Cart before the Horse

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 511-12.

.... Essentially, I think, the attitude of Jinnah and the Muslim League is governed by the desire to prevent radical changes or the democratization of India not because of a Hindu majority but because the radical elements will put an end to semi-feudal privileges etc....

Jinnah puts the cart before the horse. He says no political progress till his conditions are accepted. Under present circumstances that means a veto to progress. The right course would be to say: I stick to Pakistan and every thing else that goes with it and I shall never be satisfied with less, but I am perfectly willing to join hands with others to push out the alien authority. After that I shall fight for my rights if necessary. It is clear that he wants present conditions to continue and his position thus becomes indefensible.

Fortunately the world is changing and our hardest problems are in a sense solving themselves through the clash of events....

I do not know how far it is right for you, as a member of the Congress Working Committee, to suggest a rapprochement with Jinnah and the League on the lines you mention. This will

no doubt create confusion and misunderstanding. Would it not be better for you to consult Maulana Azad?

8. Syed Mahmud's Reply to Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter,
5 February 1942

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 97, NMML.

My dear Jawahar,

Many thanks for your letter and the trouble you have taken. If you think it is harmful and the little book should not be published there ends the matter. I need not consult any one else. But I gave a copy to Maulana Sahib at Wardha and he promised to return it with his opinion soon but so far he has not. But if there is no harm in it and the only objection in publishing it is that I am a member of the W.C. then there is no difficulty in getting over the objection. I look to you for guidance as I did all my life for my politics is governed by my personal relations while your personal relations depend on your politics. This is the tragedy. But I am not going to change my rule of conduct towards the fag-end of my life.

Now, permit to discuss some of the points raised in your letter and I hope you will bear patience with me. You say 'Jinnah puts the cart before the horse' but they say exactly the same thing about you. Please do not forget that I am not concerned with the justice or injustice of their arguments. I am here concerned with their belief and convictions only and giving them the credit for honesty I would point out to you how they controvert your arguments ... your argument is not a new one. We have been telling them this for the last 20 years—Let us win freedom first and then we shall decide about the spoil. But they reply—this is the argument of the stronger party. The stronger party thinks it can defeat the weaker one if a conflict comes between the two after the departure of the third party. Therefore it is in the interest of the weaker party to try to retain the third party as long as they become strong enough to resist the 'future aggression' of the stronger party. This is a very reactionary argument indeed. But I also realize that this is their conviction. This reactionary argument used to be put forward by the upper classes Muslims only a few years back but this is now fast becoming the conviction of the Muslim masses hence the danger. You will say then there is no help and the civil war is inevitable. The sooner it comes the better for the country. But there is an alternative to it and before the inevitable comes we should do our best to try the alternative. This is an honest effort on our part to change their conviction by going to the utmost limit to reconcile such belief by example and precept. You are a world figure and a great man and therefore you should not talk of civil war in such a manner. Even the Hindus object to your talking of it and welcoming it. As one whose name will go down to history it is your duty to find a solution of this intricate problem....

You say the world is changing and our problems will solve of themselves. To some extent it is true all the same it is a negative attitude. If the changing world will bring a revolution in India then and then only we can hope for something. But I do not see any sign of a revolution. If the Axis parties win we do not know what would happen but if the Allies win we can fairly accurately judge what is going to come. The form and name may change but in substance the exploitation will remain. I have little faith in America.... If it is not impertinent I shall point out to you the revolution which you yourself created in 1928–31. When you returned from

Europe in 1928 full of new ideas and enthusiasm you carried the country with you like a storm and it seemed then that you have nearly accomplished a revolution and judging from outward signs there was no doubt that there was a revolution—pure and simple. I was buoyant with hopes at that time but in a few years time it evaporated into communal and caste wranglings. I have come to believe that some of the social evils (like caste system) among the Hindus was equally responsible with the reactionary attitude of the Muslims for our present day troubles....

Yours affectionately,

Syed Mahmud

9. Madras Muslim Leaguers' Plea for Pact with Congress

The National Herald, 4 February 1942.

Madras, Feb. 2

A plea that the Congress and the League should soon join hands and resolve the political deadlock in the country was made by a number of speakers at a public meeting held under the auspices of the Madras Presidency Muslim League.

Syed Mahomed Padsha, president of the Madras Provincial League, who presided, characterized the continuance of the present deadlock as suicidal to the best interests of the country.

10. Vallabhbhai Patel to Ghulam Rasul Kureshi of Harijan Ashram, Sabarmati, 6 February 1942, about Funds for Constructive Work among Muslims

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Collected Works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel* (hereafter *CWSVP*), Vol. 9, p. 94.

Bhai Kureshi,

I have seen the estimate¹ which you had given while leaving Bardoli.

I can only provide conveniences which you desire, but the responsibility will be yours. Please keep Narharibhai² informed about your work. In khadi work take advice of Laxmidasbhai.³ You have shown the estimate of rupees two thousand. I have made arrangement with Mavlankardada to withdraw the amount when required.

Vallabhbhai's Vandemataram

¹ Gulam Rasul Kureshi wanted to do constructive work among Muslims and had sent a detailed budget of Rs 2,000 for a year's expenses.

² Narhari Parikh, a close associate of Vallabhbhai Patel.

³ Laxmidas Ashar.



11. Vallabhbhai Patel to Narhari Parikh, 6 February 1942, on the Financial Strain on the Congress Due to Allocating Money for Work among Muslims

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *CWSVP*, Vol. 9, p. 95.

Bhai Narhari,

Received your letter. What Bapu says is right. Some work should be done amongst Muslims, but if we go on doing work like this, we won't be able to make both ends meet. But for the present it cannot be done in any other way. So for some time it is better to give what is demanded, but if it becomes a permanent affair we won't be able to undertake that work. For the present I am making arrangements to meet the demand of Kureshi.

.... Will you look in the accounts of Kureshi's work? It is not proper to get that work done through Committee....

Vallabhbhai's Vandemataram

12. Akhand Bharat Conference: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the First Half of February 1942 for Delhi

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

An Akhand Bharat Conference on the 1st February presided over by Mr. K.M. Munshi, the former Premier of Bombay, attracted an audience of some six thousand.... [H]e expressed the opinion that 'the only solution to India's political problem is to be found in a non-religious and non-communal Government both in the provinces and at the centre; in the development of National Governments.' Other speakers bitterly opposed the Pakistan scheme, alleged to be instigated by the British Government to force the popular demand for complete independence into the background. The Congress was also criticized for giving unnecessary importance to Muslim League demands and one Sikh speaker suggested that it was only proper that when the British Government handed over India to the Indians the Punjab should be given to the Sikhs. This conference formed part of the 57th anniversary celebrations of the Diwan Hall branch of the local Arya Samaj; there were six other conferences with audiences ranging from fifty to four thousand.

13. Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Punjab for the Second Half of February 1942 about Ahrars and the Congress

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The Working Committee of the All-India *Majlis-i-Ahrar* met at Lahore on the 22nd of February and made yet another attempt to define its attitude to Congress, though its deliberations were to some extent affected by a resolution passed at a meeting of the Working Committee of the Provincial *Majlis* held the previous day to the effect that no *Ahrar* should become a member of Congress or any other political organization. After much discussion, it was resolved to invite Congress to agree to a proposal that *Ahrars* should be considered to be Congress members without paying the annual subscription of four annas, and that Congress foreign policy, particularly in respect of Islamic countries, should be placed under *Ahrar* control. (The

question of *Ahrars* becoming members of other political bodies was deferred to a later meeting.) Meanwhile, *Ahrars*, in imitation of Congress, are making preparations to enlist a volunteer corps of their own with the ostensible purpose of preserving internal security.

14. 'Muslim League Will Revolt': Threat If Non-party Conference Proposals Accepted

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23 February 1942.

New Delhi, Feb. 22

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League has passed the following resolution:

'The Working Committee have carefully considered the proposals formulated by the so-called Non-Party Conference presided over by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and are definitely of the opinion that if the British Government are misled into accepting them, Muslim India will without doubt, revolt against any such decision. For these proposals clearly mean the virtual transfer of all power and authority to the Central Government to be set up as indicated in these proposals on the basis of India being a single national unit and enjoying Dominion Status in action, thereby establishing Congress or Hindu Raj for all practical purposes. Muslim India will never accept such a position which is sought to be secured by Hindu leaders, who are virtually hand in glove with the Congress and other allied Hindu organizations in the country, under the guise of interim changes during the period of the war but in reality the object behind is to coerce the British Government at this critical moment to surrender and compel them to prejudice and torpedo the Pakistan demand of Muslim India. This will be a clear breach of pledges given by His Majesty's Government and recently reaffirmed by the Secretary of State for India Mr. Amery in his speech at Leeds on Feb. 4 in the following words: "We shall stand by our pledges, both by our general pledges as to India's future freedom, and also by our pledge to the different main elements in India's national life that they shall not be coerced under a system of Government which they are not prepared to accept."

15. Hindu Mahasabha Meeting in Basti: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the United Provinces for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

.... The Sabha [Hindu Mahasabha] also held a large meeting in Basti which was attended by about 15,000 people and addressed by Dr. Moonje and Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth.

16. Parades and 'Lathi' Exercises by RSS: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

.... The Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, Hyderabad, continues to hold parades and carry out sword and 'lathi' exercises. At one of the parades, a speaker exhorted the people to prepare themselves for the protection of the Hindus. He added that as an organization the Sangh did not endorse the Congress policy of non-violence. On the contrary, it considered the use of arms and violence necessary and legitimate for the protection and preservation of the Hindus. He

added that the internal situation is very grave and that time was not far off when the Muslims will create civil disorders in India endangering the life and property of the Hindus.

17. Communiqué from Additional Secretary, Government of India, to Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, 26 February 1942, about Allam Mashriqi's Terms of Agreement
GO No. 750 Public 1942, TNSA.

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the communication dated the 12th February, 1942, forwarded by Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi to the Government of India embodying the terms of a proposed 'agreement' as to the future relations between the Khaksar organization and the Government of India....

2. Allama Mashriqi appears to be labouring under a misapprehension in presuming that there is any question of an 'agreement' between the Government of India and the Khaksar organization, or of the latter being granted any form of 'charter' by Government. What the Government of India require from him is a clear and detailed account of the activities which the Khaksar organization would wish in future to pursue, together with an undertaking, in the form of clear orders to be issued by Allama Mashriqi to his followers that they will refrain from any other form of activity. If the programme thus outlined is in the opinion of the Government of India sufficiently innocuous, they will be prepared to consider the removal of the ban on the Khaksar organization; but they are not prepared to enter into any form of bargaining with Allama Mashriqi or any other member of the Khaksar organization....

18. Resolutions Passed by All India Committee of Hindu Mahasabha at Lucknow on 1 March: Telegram No. 40-D/42 from Governor-General to Secretary of State, Dated 4 March 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 222/42, NAI.

Following is summary of four resolutions passed by All India Committee of Hindu Mahasabha at Lucknow on March 1st.

Begins. First. Britain has failed to convince people of Hindustan of sincerity of her intentions. Tragic reverses in Far East can be prevented in Hindustan by England granting fullest political freedom to India and securing wholehearted sympathy and cooperation of Hindus. Only effective measure to rouse Indian people is bold and unambiguous proclamation which must be made immediately by British Government that India is granted full independence and co-partnership equal with Great Britain in Indo-British Commonwealth. Committee demands abolition of India Office and India Council, complete nationalization of Government of India on democratic lines, concentration of political sovereignty in India, and transfer of entire administration of India to Indian hands, including defence, finance, foreign affairs and relations with Indian States.

Second. In view of deplorable unpreparedness of India, Committee calls upon Hindu Sabhas particularly in threatened areas to organize civic defence parties and raise and equip national militia for preventing ravages caused by possible air attacks, anti-Hindu hooliganism

and internal commotion. Mahasabha defence organizations should act in cooperation with authorities and with defence organizations started by other political organizations. Government should repeat Arms Act and provide members of defence organizations with arms.

Third. Hindu Mahasabha calls upon Government to (1) relax administration of Arms Act, so that every Indian can without difficulty secure rifle and learn its use to shoot down invaders and thus support Government defence by guerilla warfare (2) encourage and provide funds for organization of national militia, (3) establish immediate factories for manufacture of aeroplanes, motors and warships (4) provide rifles to schools and colleges.

Fourth. Mahasabha apprehends that Congress may accept some antidemocratic and anti-national agreement to placate Muslims. If any such agreement is arrived at behind back of Hindu Mahasabha, it will be stoutly resisted by every possible means.

Ends.

19. The All India Azad Muslim Board: Resolutions—Delhi—1 and 2 March 1942

IAR, Vol. 1, pp. 334–5.

A meeting of the All India Azad Muslim Board was held at Delhi on the 1st of March 1942 and the following resolutions were passed unanimously after a full-day discussion:

‘Since the last session of the Board, the cataclysm of war has advanced with giant strides and the whole world lies engulfed in a deluge of blood. India is no longer a distant spectator of the war, but finds itself within the zone of imminent danger. Questions which only two years ago appeared to be vital and claimed all attention have paled into insignificance. New problems of world-wide import have arisen and great and small nations and countries are uniting their forces and resources to save their freedom. Courageous efforts have to be made for new international alignments to develop and co-ordinate determined endeavours to meet and overcome the grim consequences of the war. To avert the fate of those who have succumbed to aggression, it is imperative that no effort should be spared to knit all the people of India into a united endeavour. The country’s will should be galvanized and its immense potential effectively developed for the task of defending the country and hereby establishing its freedom in a world free of aggression. The Board is convinced that there is general unanimity in India that the country must forthwith cease to be a Dependency if this end is to be achieved and that it should have the freedom enjoyed by the other free countries of the world, including England and the Dominions. Representing nine constituent Muslim organizations and speaking for the bulk of the Indian Muslims, this Board fully supports this demand.

‘Further, it feels constrained to conclude that the specious plea of the Secretary of State for India, and the British Government that the Muslim League is the authoritative spokesman of the Indian Muslims, and that its attitude and demands constitute an insuperable obstacle in the way of India’s freedom is an indefensible subterfuge to mask the disinclination of the British Government to part with power. This serious gravity of the situation occasioned by the menace of an early invasion most imperatively demands that the British Government should immediately recognize India’s freedom and transfer real power to enable the representatives of the people to assume complete responsibility for the defence of the country as a whole in full and mutual collaboration with the other free countries’....

20. M.A. Jinnah's Leadership Repudiated: All India Momin Conference
The Leader, 5 March 1942.

New Delhi, March 3

Mr. Shaikh Mohammad Zahiruddin, president, and Mr. Abdul Kayum, vice-president, All-India Momin Conference have sent the following cablegram to London to Mr. Churchill, Prime Minister, Sir Stafford Cripps, leader of the House of Commons and Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India:

'The All-India Momin Conference representing over 45,000,000 Muslims of the Momin (Ansar) community repudiates Mr. Jinnah's leadership, as also the Muslim League's claim to possess the sole right to speak on behalf of the Indian Musalmans and supports the demand for immediate recognition of India's freedom. Further, the conference demands separate representation of the Muslims in the Governments likely to be formed at the centre as well as in the provinces.'—A.P.I.

21. Muslim League's Warning to the British Government, 6 March 1942,
about Adopting Any Scheme without the Consent or Approval of
the Muslim League

The National Herald, 8 March 1942.

The Muslim League Party in the Central Legislature with Mr. M.A. Jinnah in the chair, resolved to send the following cablegram to Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill—

'The Muslim League Party in the Central Legislature views with grave alarm and apprehension reports that his Majesty's Government and British Parliament may be stampeded into making pronouncement or adopting interim scheme within the framework of the present constitution or future, regarding constitutional changes, and impressed upon his Majesty's Government, through you that no declaration should be made which will prejudice, pre-judge or militate in any way against the Muslim demand for Pakistan as the only solution of India's future constitutional problem and that the Sapru scheme should not be accepted because it is highly detrimental to Muslim interest and no other scheme be adopted or constitutional change made without the consent or approval of the Muslim League.'

The cablegram was sent today.

A public meeting of the Muslims of Delhi, held under the Chairmanship of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, also passed a resolution warning the British Government that if any declaration is made which prejudices, pre-judges or militates in any way against the Muslim demand for Pakistan it will create a very serious situation in this country for which the responsibility will be entirely of the British Government.

22. M.K. Gandhi's 'Appeal to Quaid-e-Azam', 2 March 1942
CWMG, Vol. 82 (the CD Version), pp. 84–5.

I have been painfully but regularly going through the English weeklies that come to me and that are devoted to the cause of the Muslim League. I read them so as to keep myself informed of what the Muslim mind as influenced by the Muslim League thinks. Not a week passes but these

weeklies contain what to me appear to be distortions of truth and vilification of the Congress and Congressmen and Hindus. What has prompted me to write these lines is a virulent attack on Hinduism in one of the weeklies. Here is an extract from the article:

‘Hinduism is the greatest curse of India, and it is based on intolerance and inequality. To call oneself a “Hindu” is to confess that one is reactionary and narrow-minded. No decent, civilized, honest and sincere human being who knows what Hinduism is and what it stands for, would like to be known as a Hindu or join this faith of primitive barbarians. For it is on barbarity that this so-called religion is based. No other word can describe the state of 97 per cent of the population who have been decreed by the gods and goddesses of this precious religion as impure and unclean beings fit only to serve the remaining 3 per cent of the population.... We would far rather suggest to the students to prepare in their laboratories of the mind deadly bombs which would completely smash and destroy Hinduism, the greatest menace to India’s welfare and well-being.’

I hope I shall not be told that the article in question is taken from another newspaper. It has been taken in order to hold up Hinduism to scorn. Though the founder of this paper is Quaid-e-Azam himself and it is issued under the direction of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Hon. Secretary of the League, I fancy that they have not seen the article in question.

What will be the state of Hindus under Pakistan? Will they be suppressed as barbarians? There is no attempt in the papers at looking at the other side. The policy adopted in the papers must lead to the promotion of bitterness and strife between the two communities. If the end is to be attained through strife and force and not by persuasion and argument, I can have nothing to say. But I observe from Quaid-e-Azam’s speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them. I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League.

Sevagram, March 2, 1942

23. Congress Does Not Represent the Hindus; Solution of Political Deadlock Should Be Approved by Mahasabha: V.D. Savarkar Repudiates C. Rajagopalachari’s Statement
The Tribune, 8 March 1942.

Bombay, March 7

Mr. V.D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, in a statement to the Press says:

In the interest of Hindudom, I feel it my duty to repudiate most emphatically the statement made by Shriyut Rajagopalachariar this week who, according to the Associated Press, stated “What the Muslim League wants is a fair and just share in real power and no Indian politician is interested in denying this.” This officiousness is only equaled by his audacity in presuming that he was entitled to play the role of a self-appointed spokesman of all politicians in India and secondly, that all Indians who did not think the demands of the Muslim League “fair and just” were not politicians at all.

The League demands that India should be vivisected into a brood of Pakistans: does that amount only to a desire to have a “fair and just” share in real power? The League claims a division of 50/50 per cent representation and political power between the Hindus and Muslims at the Centre, is that just and fair? And even if Rajaji and men of his persuasion are inclined

to think so, does it follow that all those who do not agree with him are not admitted into the charmed circle of "Indian politicians"?...

Consequently it must be made clear once more that the Congress does in no way represent the Hindus and unless and until any solution or compromise is sanctioned by the Hindu Mahasabha, which is the only outstanding representative organization of the Hindus in the land, it cannot be binding on the Hindus simply because the Congress and the League have subscribed to it....

24. Strenuous Akali Efforts to Consolidate Hold over Sikh Public:
Extract from Punjab Fortnightly Report for the First Half of March
1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

Sikhs—Akalis are making strenuous efforts to consolidate their hold over the Sikh public in view of critical times ahead, and a deputation led by Master Tara Singh has been appointed by the Working Committee of the All Parties Sikh Conference to tour the province and preach Panthic unity. At the same time, vigorous preparations for the third All-India Akali Conference to be held shortly at Vahila Kalan in the Lyallpur district are in progress, and a scheme is afoot to enroll special Sikh Volunteers, corresponding to Khaksar janbazes, who can be summoned to Amritsar in times of emergency. (Master Tara Singh recently expressed the Akali attitude to constitutional reform in a telegram sent by him to the Secretary of State for India on behalf of the Shiromani Akali Dal urging (i) that a national Government with full powers should be established immediately, (ii) that Mr. Jinnah's threats should be ignored, and (iii) that Sikhs should be consulted on constitutional reforms and should be represented at the Centre.)

25. Meeting of Provincial Muslim League in Quetta: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Baluchistan for the Second Half of March
1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

2. Political. The only political activity of any importance was a meeting of the Provincial Muslim League held in Quetta on the 22nd of March. The meeting, which was attended by about 200 persons was addressed by various members, including Qazi Muhammad Isa, who stated that Pakistan was the goal of the Muslim League and that the entire Muslim population of India, numbering about 10 crores was prepared to make any sacrifice for its achievement. There was nothing in his speech particularly anti-Government but he made a somewhat bitter attack upon Sapru and other political bodies who were supporting the Congress in opposing Pakistan. Resolutions were passed condemning the proposals made by the Sapru Conference, expressing confidence in Mr. Jinnah, recommending the release of Inayat Ullah Khan, head of the Khaksars and placing all responsibility on the British Government for the situation that would arise if the Pakistan Scheme was not accepted.



26. Editorial about L.S. Amery's Claim That Muslim League Was the Principal Organization Voicing Muslim Public Opinion

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14 March 1942.

Mr. Jinnah's Patron

Mr. Amery has at last come into the open and taken up the cudgels on behalf of the Muslim League. So far as the British authorities are concerned, the Muslim League has always been recognised as the Muslim organization par excellence, and the terms Muslim and Muslim League have been regarded as almost synonymous. Considering the genesis of the League and the purpose for which it was originally organised under official inspiration and patronage, this is scarcely to be wondered at. But with the spread of the nationalist spirit among Muslims, the position of the League has been increasingly under challenge, and it is a well-known fact that the League today represents only a handful of Muslims belonging to the upper classes who are out to secure special favours for themselves and their group by opposing the nationalist movement. The economic and political interests of this group are by no means identical with those of the Muslim masses, sunk in poverty and ignorance. To-day there are at least three nationalist Muslim parties in the country, the Ahrars, the Shiahhs and the Momins; and there can be no manner of doubt that their combined numerical strength is far superior to that of the League. There is again the Jamiat-Ul-Ulema, the organization of the Muslim divines who wield an enormous influence over their co-religionists and who have always been opposed to the pretensions of the League leaders. Nor need we forget the Krishak Proja Party of Bengal, the organization of the Muslim agriculturists of this province whose representatives in the Bengal Assembly outnumber those of the League.

These facts tell their own tale, but Mr. Amery has evidently no use for facts in his political scheme. In reply to a question put to him by Mr. Sorensen of the Labour Party as to whether he had considered the recent declaration of the All India Momin Conference claiming to represent forty-five million Muslims and supporting the demand for immediate recognition of India's freedom and repudiating the claim of the Muslim League to speak on behalf of Indian Muslims, all that Mr. Amery did was to reiterate his belief that the Muslim League was the principal organization voicing Muslim political opinion and that the Momins, consisting chiefly of weavers and agricultural labourers, were no more than four or five millions in number and that many of them were members of the Muslim League! Mr. Sorensen pointed out that he had received telegrams asserting that forty-five millions was the correct figure; but Mr. Amery knew better. Telegrams might have been mistaken, but not the infallible Secretary of State!...

Unity is Vital in India.

27. Resolutions Requesting Lift of Ban on Khaksars: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Ajmer-Merwara for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

Resolutions were passed at a Muslim meeting held in the Dargah on March 20th requesting Government to lift the ban on the Khaksar Organisation, to permit Allama Mashriqi to leave Madras and unconditionally to release the Khaksars still confined in jail.

28. Assembly of Khaksars at Fatehpuri Mosque: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of March 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

On the 19th March some fifty Khaksars assembled in plain clothes in the Fatehpuri Mosque to commemorate the members of the organization who lost their lives in Lahore in March 1940. They were instructed by a local leader to avoid any action which would bring them into conflict with the law and to help the Government as far as possible.

29. From D.M., East Khandesh, to Home Secretary, Government of
Bombay, 1 April 1942, about a Communal Riot in Jalgaon
Home Department Special File No. 844 (IX), MSA.

Sir,

I regret to have to report that on the evening of 30th, Id-e-Milad, a party of Muslims about 1000 strong went to an Idgah at about 7.15 P.M. when stones were thrown by some youths of the R.S.S. Sangh, who were drilling in the School compound adjacent to the route of the Muslims. They returned the stones and there were minor injuries to both sides. The clash was broken off and the Muslims proceeded to the Idgah and held their prayers. News of the clash was sent to the District Superintendent of Police and the Home Inspector and both hastened to the scene.

2. Half an hour later, after the Home Inspector had arrived, but before either the District Superintendent of Police or the reserve police could get to the spot, the Muslims, by then over 2000 in number, began to return from the Idgah. The Home Inspector, seeing that a crowd of some 3000 Hindus was waiting for the Muslims, tried to divert the Muslims from their route, but in vain. A melee ensued in which one Muslim received injuries to which he later succumbed. The deceased was a Municipal School Master from Bombay paying a visit to relatives in Nashirabad.

3. At 7.50 p.m. I was informed of the clash on the telephone and at once went to the place. I found the District Superintendent of Police and all available police already on the spot: patrols were out and the streets were more or less deserted. After consultation with the District Superintendent of Police, we decided to issue immediate orders to forbid the carrying of lathis and other weapons.

4. About 8.30 p.m. a Muslim walking alone in a gully in the Hindu quarter was attacked with lathis by three men thought to have been Hindus. His skull was fractured and he later died. A police patrol was on the spot within two minutes, but the assailants had vanished. Investigations into this murder are in progress, though I have some doubt whether they will prove successful in view of the Warren-like nature of the neighbourhood.

At about 10 p.m. after further consultation with the District Superintendent of Police, I issued an order (copy enclosed) under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code with a view to preventing the trouble spreading to the mill hands going to work this morning.

6. This morning only 6 Muslims out of 160 attended the Mills for work and those unwillingly. They were later sent home under escort at the request of themselves and the Manager.

The relatives of one of the deceased have asked permission to take the bodies of both the dead men from the hospital to their home and thence to the burial ground. I have allowed this,

though no one other than the deceased's relatives and certain reliable Muslim Panchas will be allowed to accompany the bier. The necessary police arrangements will be made.

8. I am issuing orders closing liquor shops, hotels and pan shops at 6 p.m. tonight.

9. I am seeing the Muslim leaders this morning and have also warned the leaders of the R.S.S. Sangh that any further provocative action by their followers will result in stringent action against themselves.

10. If no further incident occurs tonight, I think the affair will blow over.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant

Sd/-

District Magistrate, E. Khandesh

30. Meeting of Working Committee of Hindu Mahasabha at Delhi: Secret Report Dated 2 April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 222/1942, NAI.

Although the meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha was scheduled to take place in Delhi on the 3rd of April, the members, Savarkar, Shyama Prasad Mukharji, Moonje, Bhai Parmanand, etc. decided to meet on the 1st of April and consider the lines on which the resolution in reply to the War Cabinet's proposals should be framed. The object in advancing these discussions was (a) to save time, (b) to give the Hindu public a badly needed lead and (c) to accommodate some members of the Congress Working Committee like Sardar Patel, who wanted the Hindu Mahasabha to give some indication of its attitude, so that the Congress Working Committee itself should not yield to the proposals or waver in favour of acceptance. The Patel Group in the Congress feels that if the Hindu Mahasabha alone rejects the proposals the Congress will lose much of its influence with the Hindu masses to the Hindu Mahasabha. The Patel group has been privately meeting Hindu Mahasabha and Sikh leaders to exchange views.

2. The draft resolution on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha Working Committee was considered on these lines:-

- (i) The integral unity of India as a whole has been an accomplished fact of Hindu thought throughout the ages. Hindu religious texts are full of prayers offered to the worship of India as the mother country extending from Kashmir to the Cape, irrespective of its divisions due to history or administration. Indian Emperors like Asoka and Akbar actually achieved the political unification of a large part of India and administered it as a single unit. This historical achievement has been further extended and stabilised by the British Government of India which even today governs India as a unit, and treats it as a Unitary State.
- (ii) The proposal in regard to this fundamental factor will thus mean going back in history, destroying our national heritage and undoing what constitutes the noble work of England in India in unifying the country in so many years. The starting point of Indian political reform must be the recognition of the primary fact that India is an indivisible inviolable and integral unity which must be maintained and strengthened at all costs.

- (iii) This does not mean that India as a Unitary State does not contain different communities, divided by races, religion or language. These differences are to be fully recognised and protected on principle by a comprehensive scheme of cultural autonomy which is seen in operation in its best form in the Turkish Constitution. The scheme has also been elaborated in detail by the League of Nations.
- (iv) On the basis of such a scheme of the cultural autonomy of communities, the U.S.S.R. has been able to bring together within one Government as many as 27 different communities, peoples and religions. The U.S.S.R. today functions as a strong centralised State (Unitary) by 'dissociating Statehood from race and religion'. The U.S.S.R. does not permit any of its constituent units the freedom to dissociate itself from the Union. A part of a State is not at liberty to take steps that may lead towards the disintegration of the parent state.
- (v) The right of a part of State to secede from it was the vital issue of the American Civil War, on the eve of which Abraham Lincoln made his historical declaration: 'I hold that the Union of these States is perpetual. No State, upon its own mere action, can lawfully go out of the Union.'
- (vi) The Hindu Mahasabha cannot, therefore, be a party to proposals aiming at the dismembering of India as an established Unitary State, which has been up to now functioning as a living organism.
- (vii) The Hindu Mahasabha has been throughout supporting the Government in its war effort and is of the opinion that it may be much more increased by making the people feel that it is as much a war for their own freedom as it is that of any of the Allied Nations...

4. H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner again invited Savarkar, Syama Prasad Mukharji and Dr. Moonje to meet him. It is reported that the Hindu Mahasabha leaders succeeded in making a good impression on the Maharaja of Bikaner and other princes in that they conveyed the idea that their fears were confined to the secession of provinces and not about Hindu States where Hindu interests had always been suitably protected. In consequence some of the Hindu princes, it is reported, have assured the Hindu Mahasabha leader that they need not have any fear about their alignment with Mr. Jinnah. Some of the Hindu Mahasabha leaders had unfounded fears on this account, not having had previous contact with the princes.

31. Moderate Sikhs Meet at Amritsar: Resolutions Passed

The Tribune, 6 April 1942.

Amritsar, April 5

Resolutions, demanding the immediate establishment of fully representative Government at the Centre, owing allegiance to the Crown, consisting of all important elements in the country, including at least one Sikh; stipulating that all portfolios including the Defence, should remain in the hands of Indians; opposing secession of provinces and other units, demanding that Indian Union should remain intact and must not be vivisected; that, as mentioned in Sir Stafford Cripps's proposals, India should be given self-governing Dominion status on the cessation of hostilities; that in any future constitution for India both at the Centre and at the provinces there should be no separate communal electorate; that electorate should be joint, with reservation

of seats for important minorities including the Sikhs, on the weightage basis and that the Sikhs should be given a separate representation on the War Council and the Executive Council were adopted at a conference of nearly 150 Sikh leaders of various moderate Sikh groups held this afternoon at the Majithia House, in response to the invitation of Sardar Kirpal Singh Majithia, who recently met Sir Stafford Cripps in New Delhi.

Sardar Jodh Singh, Principal of the Khalsa College, presided....

32. Muslim League Resolution on Evacuees, Allahabad, 6 April

The Tribune, 7 April 1942.

The open session of the Muslim League on resumption this morning continued discussion on Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman's resolution authorizing the President Mr. Jinnah to appoint a committee to take forthwith all necessary and effective steps for the protection of life, honour and property of Mussalmans.

The resolution was further supported by Haji Sattar (for the Madras province), Mr. G.M. Syed (for Sind), Mr. Chundrigar (for Bombay), all members of the Muslim League Working Committee, and Mohd. Ismail (for Bihar), Mustafa Shah Gilani (for the Punjab), Khan Bahadur Mohd. Momin, Joint Secretary A.I. Muslim League (for Bengal), Syed Abdul Rauf Shah (for C.P.), Maulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni, Mr. Karimul Raza M.L.A. They all stressed the need for organizing the District and City Muslim Leagues throughout the country to meet any eventualities that might arise due to the approach of war to the very doors of India.

Begum Aizaz Rasool (United Provinces) supporting the resolution stressed the part which women could play in cases of emergency. She made special mention of nursing, first aid and other relief work which could be taken up by women.

Begum Mohammad Ali entered a strong plea for educating women so that they could effectively share the responsibilities of men in these critical times. She exhorted Muslim women to join the League and organize themselves.

Mr. Jinnah explaining the resolution referred to 'the grave internal and external dangers at this juncture' and the need to save the lives, honour and property of 100 million Mussalmans. He said it did not mean that we did not also have the concern and care of other fellowmen belonging to different communities, castes and creed. He emphasized that the Muslims should organize themselves in a systematic and planned manner without any loss of time....

Mr. Jinnah made a special reference to emergencies like shortage of foodstuffs, other necessities of life and rise in prices and said they must be dealt with. Mr. Jinnah said there may be villages or towns in which Muslims were in a handful minority and he had grave apprehensions about them in case of any disorder. He suggested that they should be in cases of emergency brought at any cost or sacrifice to places where there were a larger number of Muslims.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.



33. Sikh Leaders Meet in Amritsar: We Will Not Allow Punjab to Become Pakistan

The Tribune, 9 April 1942.

Amritsar, April 8

A meeting of the prominent workers of the Shiromani Akali Dal, presided over by Master Tara Singh, was held here in the office of the S.G.P.C. last evening for an hour and a half and discussed the British Government's proposals.

Among the leaders present were Giani Kartar Singh, M.L.A., Sardar Channan Singh, M.L.A., S. Teja Singh Akarpuri, Giani Harcharan Singh Hudiara, Giani Sher Singh, Babu Labh Singh, Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman and S. Pritam Singh Patiala.

Master Tara Singh said that Hindus and Sikhs should join hands, in order to offer a united front and call an anti-Pakistan conference.

The meeting adopted a lengthy resolution saying that this meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal workers, having carefully considered the proposals of the British War Cabinet, the talks that the representatives of the All-Parties Sikh Committee had with Sir Stafford Cripps, was of the opinion that these proposals were defective and incomplete from several points of view. The right given to provinces to secede from the Indian Union on the strength of adult suffrage and to establish a separate rule was highly dangerous. In clear words, it meant to give a practical shape to Pakistan and undermine the rights of the minority in the north-west of India, including the Punjab. The Sikhs had always been opposed to this proposal....

The meeting further declared that the Sikh community would not permit the Punjab to become Pakistan and so long as the changes suggested by the Sikh delegation were not incorporated in these proposals, it would create every possible hindrance in giving a practical shape to these proposals....

The third resolution lodged a vigorous protest against the arrest and detention, without trial, of Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke and S. Niranjan Singh Talib who were held in great esteem by the Sikh Panth, demanding proper treatment for them in jail, their release, if they were not to be tried in open courts, and if their detention was desirable, their transfer from the Lahore Fort to the Lahore Central Jail was demanded.

34. Press Statement Issued by V.D. Savarkar at Bombay on 9 April 1942: Telegram Word Code from Governor-General to Secretary of State, Dated 10 April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 222/42, NAI.

Hindu Mahasabha's rejection of Cripps' scheme in no way means that Mahasabha has given up policy of militarization of Hindus. Principle of responsive cooperation which guides Mahasabha policy implies any means calculated to defend and advance legitimate interests of Hindudom. Scheme of British war cabinet was highly detrimental to Hindu interests and had therefore to be rejected. But Hindu interests demand our joining Government military forces. We must intensify militarization movement and join in as large numbers as possible in Army Navy Air Force A.R.P. Civic Guards Ordnance factories etc. throughout India. Thus only will Hindus be in position to defend homes from ravages of war and to suppress any internal anti-Hindu anarchy. Martial mentality and capacity thus developed will prove incalculable asset to national strength even after war.

35. Mahasabha's Support to War Efforts

The National Herald, 13 April 1942.

Madras, April 12

In a communication to the Governor of Madras, offering whole-hearted cooperation to the war efforts, Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, vice-president of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, states:

'War has come to India and first to our presidency. I write this to convey to the Government the assurance that the Hindus will stand by the British Government and render every possible help to win the war, whatever may be our political differences. My friends and myself are convinced that India's future depends upon the ultimate victory of Great Britain. With pride in the past and faith in the future, Great Britain and India stand together and face the war.'

36. M.A. Jinnah Appoints Defence Committee for Protecting Muslims

The National Herald, 13 April 1942.

Statement by Mr. Jinnah, president of the All India Muslim League: 'In pursuance of the resolution passed by the All India Muslim League at Allahabad on April 6 authorising me to appoint a committee for the purpose of taking all necessary and effective steps for the protection of life, honour and property of the Muslims, I have appointed a committee consisting of Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan, chairman, Sir Nazimuddin, Ch. Khaliquzzaman and Haji Muhammad Isa. The committee will start its work forthwith and get into touch with the provincial organizations of the various provinces and undertake an extensive tour of the country and after acquainting itself with the local conditions concert measures with a view to maintain peace and tranquility in the face of grave danger to the country and render all assistance to the suffering and helpless.

37. Muslim League Activities in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP): Fortnightly Report for the NWFP for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

A few meetings were held in the Peshawar, Mardan and Hazara districts under the auspices of the Muslim League, at which speakers welcomed the implied recognition of the Pakistan scheme in the War Cabinet's proposals. One speaker in Mardan condemned in somewhat violent terms the activities of the Congress Party among Muslims in this Province.

38. Muslim League's Concern at Soldiers' Conduct in Feni Sub-division of Noakhali District

Star of India, 20 April 1942, from GOI Home Political File No. 37/11/42, NAI.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League was held last evening at 40, Theatre Road, Calcutta and passed the following resolutions. Mr. Tamizudin Khan presided. Another sitting of the meeting will be held today at 5 P.M.

The Working Committee has received with horror a report of the atrocities of a revolting nature committed on innocent villagers, male and female, in the Feni Sub-division of the

district of Noakhali by a number of soldiers. The Working Committee demands that exemplary punishment be awarded to the offenders, so that confidence may be restored and such punishment may prove a deterrent for the future.

The Working Committee feels strongly that if adequate redress is not forthcoming and effective steps are not taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents, it is bound to create a serious situation which may lead to permanent estrangement of feelings between the people and the military authorities, thereby hampering the war efforts.

The Working Committee resolves that a deputation composed of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, Mr. Hamidul Huq Chowdhury, Mr. K. Shahabuddin and Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy do wait on His Excellency, the Governor, to represent the serious situation arising out of the unhappy incidents at Feni.

The Working Committee views the situation with grave concern and assures the people that the Muslim League is taking all possible steps to see that the grievances are redressed and such incidents are not repeated in future. In the meantime the Committee advice the people of the district to face the situation with fortitude.

39. Evacuation of Muslim Minorities: Extract from Fortnightly Report
for Bihar for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Muslim League—The Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League during the Allahabad session to organize the Muslim Protection Scheme has recently visited the province. One part of the scheme dealing with the evacuation of Muslim minorities is already being implemented according to reports from Darbhanga. The programme of this Committee is expected to have a very unsettling effect on Muslim minds in the province as its main item is to urge Muslims to organize themselves for opposing Hindu aggression in the event of the war situation deteriorating still further. As the implementing of this Committee's programme proceeds, it is bound to have its reaction on the programme of the Hindu Sabha so that there is real danger of bodies of volunteers formed on a communal basis whose main concern it will be not to fight the common enemy when and if he comes, but to fight each other.

40. Communal Tension in Nagpur: Extract from Fortnightly Report
for the Central Provinces and Berar for the Second Half of
April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Mr. Siddique Ali Khan of Nagpur advised Muslims living in predominantly Hindu localities in the town to move to Muslim localities and his advice is being followed by some of the Muslims. Mr. Siddique Ali Khan has also advised Muslim youths to train themselves in the akhadas so as to be ready for all eventualities. Rumours are in circulation in Nagpur that on the 10th May, which the Hindu Mahasabha proposes to observe as anti-Pakistan day, there is likely to be trouble and Muslims are reported to be preparing themselves to face any disorder which may arise in the town. Some of the rumours were to the effect that Mr. Jinnah's effigy would be taken in procession on anti-Pakistan day and would be burnt.

41. Formation of Hindustani Prachar Sabha

Harijan Sevak, 26 April 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, pp. 59–60.

The Hindustani Prachar Sabha to which I referred in *Harijan Sevak* is about to be formed now. A draft constitution has been prepared. It has been sent to some friends. In a few days the scheme of the Sabha will be put before the public. Many people are under the impression that the Sabha will be a rival of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. How can I knowingly oppose the Sammelan with which I have been associated since 1918? There has to be a solid reason for my doing so. But there is none. Yes, it is true that as far as Urdu is concerned I go a little further than the other members. They think I am going back. Only time will decide who is right.

To make it clear that I am not opposed to the Sammelan, I entered into correspondence with Shri Purushottamdas Tandon, as a result of which the standing committee of the Sammelan passed the following resolution:

The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan has from its very inception regarded Hindi as the national language and it continues to do so. Urdu is a literary style deriving from Hindi and having an admixture of Arabic and Persian words. The Sammelan propagates Hindi but is not opposed to Urdu.

In the opinion of this Committee, members of Mahatma Gandhi's proposed Hindustani Prachar Sabha can become members of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and its sub-committees, but from the practical point of view it will be better that the office-bearers of the Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti should not become office-bearers of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha.

I could not have expected more generosity than this. I was and still am of opinion that there could have been no question of conflict if the office-bearers could be the same. There is a possibility of conflict in the present arrangement but if both the parties behave with gentlemanliness this can be avoided. If the Hindustani Prachar Sabha succeeds, national language will no longer remain a political issue. In fact it should never have been associated with politics.

42. Akalis and the Demand for Pakistan: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... The withdrawal of the British Government's proposals [Cripps proposals] has caused no abatement in *Akali-Hindu Mahasabha* anxiety to mobilize opinion against *Pakistan*, and elaborate plans are being made to stage an anti-*Pakistan* Conference on a large scale in Sultanwind in the Amritsar district next June, so much so that *Akalis* have indefinitely postponed their annual conference in order to concentrate their energies on this project. In the interval, *Pakistan* continues to be denounced at *Akali diwans*, particularly at Amritsar, and this has provoked local Muslims to organize counter-meetings. In addition, the Hindu *Mahasabha* has ordered that the 10th of May should be observed as 'anti-Pakistan day', and the Central *Akali Dal* are planning to hold an anti-Pakistan conference of its own in Lahore on the 17th and 18th of June.... *Akalis* with Congress leanings consider that Sikhs should throw in their lot with Congress and concentrate on persuading it not to accept the scheme; Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh consider that an Akali-Hindu alliance offers the best chance of resistance; whilst Baba Kharak Singh considers that *Akalis*, instead of becoming subservient to the Hindu

Mahasabha, should attempt to enlist the sympathies of 'nationalist' Muslims. Meanwhile, the *Khalistan* alternative is being kept in the background, though efforts continue to be made to arm the community and to place it on an organized and semi-military basis on the plea of self-preservation. At the same time, perennial *Akali* mistrust of Congress has been revived in an acute form by the resolution passed by the Madras Congress Legislature Party.... Speakers at *Akali* meetings held during the fortnight attacked the British Government for ignoring Sikh interests, denounced Mr. Rajagopalachariar for deferring to the Muslim League, and attacked the Unionist Government on the usual ground of displaying favouritism to Muslims in public appointments and discrimination against the Sikh right to perform *jhatka* etc.

43. Terms of Agreement Put Forward by Allama Mashriqi in a Letter to the Chief Secretary, Madras Government, on 27 April 1942
G.O. No. 750—Public 1942, TNSA.

.... I submit the following draft of the detailed instructions concerning 'the future conduct of the Khaksars' which I propose to issue to them:

- (1) Khaksars will discontinue during the War the display of uniforms and Akhuwat Badges, the carrying of Belchas¹, the marches, the drilling of any description in public or in private. The keeping of uniforms or badges or belchas or the use of belchas at the time of genuine social service or the wearing of clothes of Khaki colour which are not of military shape is permitted. Round red cloth of the size of a rupee must be worn on the right arm of every Khaksar.
- (2) During the War the programme of the Khaksars will be restricted to daily prayers, social service, gatherings once a week, sports, religious lectures, social functions, also genuine service of all kinds necessitated by sudden events and accidents. These activities will be conducted as before by the local Khaksar leaders appointed from time to time in accordance with the daily routine observed during the past twelve years.
- (3) The Evening Prayer will be conducted by the local leader for about half an hour in accordance with the dictates of Islam and with perfect discipline. Non-Moslem Khaksars will conduct their prayers in accordance with their own religions. Detailed direction will be issued with respect to the conduct of prayers in each case.
- (4) On Fridays Khaksars will gather for Friday prayers in some big Mosque or open space and will thereafter give religious lectures or speak on historical subjects related to Islam or other religions. These lectures must promote feelings of brotherhood with all.
- (5) On Saturdays Khaksars will gather in the night for joint prayers and social service. The Local leader will read out reports of social service and will lecture on social and religious topics. He will also order the conduct of the social service programme for the ensuing week.
- (6) On Saturdays Khaksars will gather in the night for joint prayers and social service. The Local leader will read out reports of social service and will lecture on social and religious topics. He will also order the conduct of the social service programme for the ensuing week.
- (7) Khaksar Camps can only be held at places far removed from the public during the War.
- (8) Daily social service after night prayers should not exceed one hour and a half but individually a Khaksar can do any social service at any time.

- (9) Khaksars will not take part in the activities of the political organizations obstructing war effort and will not make propaganda against it in any form. They will also refrain from any form of activity other than those specified above. They however reserve the right that their political importance in the country be most adequately recognized while constitutional privileges are given to other parties, and for this purpose Khaksars can take up peaceful constitutional work at the orders of the leader of the Organisation.

I have now submitted the draft of detailed instructions which I propose to issue to the Khaksars strictly in accordance with what the Government of India have asked me to do in your letter quoted above, on the very day your letter reached me and I hope that this draft will satisfy them in every way and that most prompt action will be taken by the Government of India regarding the removal of the ban, the release of prisoners, as foreshadowed in their express telegram received by me on the 9th January 1942 also the release of properties etc. as well as detenues.

I may add that, as I said before, it is not possible for me to go with my family from place to place seeking secure places in the Presidency that I do not know, at great trouble and expense, and that if the intention of the Government of India is not to give me needless trouble, I request most respectfully that the orders concerning the lifting of the ban be issued within the next few days so that I may be able to remove my people from here....

Inayatullah Khan

Madras, dated the 27th April 1942

¹ Spades.

44. Leaflets Distributed by Allama Mashriqi's Follower in North Arcot District: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

S.S.M. Bhamani a follower of Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqui distributed certain leaflets in North Arcot District about the treatment of the Allama. This is said to have created an impression in the minds of the Muslim public that the Government have been very harsh towards the Khaksars and their leader. The leaflets have been proscribed.

45. *Harijan* in Urdu

Harijan, 3 May 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, p. 74.

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava is bringing out *Harijan* weekly in Urdu from Lahore. Articles from *Harijan* have for long been published in *Hindustan* of Lucknow. Arrangements are being made to publish an authentic edition at the Navajivan Press. The latter will be possible only when I can get an Urdu scholar who can throw in his lot with me. The two have their own individuality. And if the Navajivan Press succeeds in the venture, there will be a third with its own individuality. With the impetus that is being given to Urdu learning through the proposed Hindustani Prachar Sabha such a venture has become a possibility.

46. Akali Politics Assumes a Less Strident Character: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Akali politics have recently assumed a less strident character due partly to gratification at the sympathetic references to Sikhs made by Mr. Amery and Sir Stafford Cripps in the House of Commons; and partly to the expectations of a rapprochement with the Unionist Party, which it is hoped will lead to the concession of *Akali* demands relating to *Jhatka*, Gurmukhi, and Sikh representation in the Viceroy's expanded Council and in the services; and also to the appointment of an Akali, preferably S. Baldev Singh, M.L.A., as a Minister in the Punjab Government. In anticipation of an arrangement of this nature, S. Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh have been attempting to win over the support of members of B. Kharak Singh's party, an effort has been made to suppress internal disputes by selecting district *Akali Dal* office-bearers through nomination instead of through elections, and there has been a recrudescence of intrigues in Patiala State aimed at consolidating *Akali* influence there. Meanwhile, the embitterment of communal relations caused by continued anti-Pakistan propaganda conducted at *Akali* and *Hindu Mahasabha* meetings has led the Punjab Government to issue a notification delegating the powers contained in Rule 56 of the Defence of India Rules to Deputy Commissioners, in order to enable them to ban or restrict meetings likely to exacerbate communal feelings or to have an adverse effect on the morale of the people or the war effort of the province. The projected anti-Pakistan conference to be held at Sultanwind in the Amritsar district next month under joint *Akali-Hindu Mahasabha* auspices clearly fell under the scope of this notification, and the Reception Committee, of which Master Tara Singh and Captain Keshap Chandra are members, met at Amritsar on the 18th of May and resolved, under protest, to advise the *Hindu Mahasabha* and the *Shiromani Akali Dal* to postpone the conference. The communal aspect of *Akali* political activity is thus likely to recede, at any rate for the time being, into the background, though *Akalis* have not abandoned their plans to raise a picked volunteer corps with the ostensible object of defending Sikh *Gurdwaras*.

47. Strengthening of Hindu Volunteer Organizations Urged in Delhi:
Confidential DO, Dated 4 May 1942, from Office of Chief
Commissioner, Delhi
File No. 1/42, SB, CID New Delhi.

At a Hindu meeting at Qarol Bagh on the 26th April the strengthening of Hindu volunteer organizations, the Arya Vir Dal and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh was urged.

48. Inqila'b-e-Jadid on the Fate of the Madras Resolution Relating to
Pakistan
Home Department Special File No. 1018-I, MSA.

Referring to the fate of the Madras resolution at the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Allahabad, the Inqila'b-e-Jadid writes:- 'It is India's misfortune that the Congress leaders who style themselves as the leaders of India have so far failed to understand the simple principle in politics that if the Musalmans had become politically organized by this time, India would

have become free today and there would not have been the tension between the Hindus and the Musalmans of which the Musalmans have become so tired that they now want to have a separate home for themselves. Rajaji's desire that the Musalmans should organise themselves, should become powerful and thereby make the Hindus powerful, itself contains the secret of the Hindu-Muslim politics. If the Congressite Hindus had acted on this principle from the very beginning India would not have been a slave today and Rajaji would not have been compelled to get the principle of Pakistan accepted by the Congress. As regards the contention of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad we have no complaint to make against him or his colleagues in as much as they are simply doing their duty. But we are sorry that they, in spite of their being Muslim, are supporting the anti-Muslim policy of the Congress. We already knew that the resolution of Rajaji would be defeated. Yet we are extremely indebted to him in as much as he has done a great service to the country, especially he has done a great service to the Musalmans. The Muslims of India need not say now that the Congress is, in fact, a wing of the Hindu Mahasabhaite Hindus and that they should not believe in their tall pledges pertaining to the future. The salvation of the Muslims lies in their getting united and organized. The Muslim League is their representative political party. The Congress has been endeavouring to break up the Muslim League. The Congress leaders on account of their lack of insight and narrow outlook have made the tragedy a complete one. Only time can now decide matters. Rajaji of course has sounded the signal. The ten crores of Musalmans should become one voice so that the Congress leaders may not dare to break up the Muslim League.'

49. Khaksars and C. Rajagopalachari: Extracts from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

It is reported that there has been increased activity on the part of Khaksars at the instigation of Allama Mashriqi who appears to have told them that he has undertaken to suspend only the military part of the Khaksar activity and not the political part. In spite of the opposition of the official Muslim league, the Khaksars induced a number of Muslims to proceed to the Central Station to welcome Mr. Rajagopalachari when he returned to Madras. About two to three hundred Muslims were given red badges and drawn up in a line in the compound of the Central Station and when Mr. Rajagopalachari passed them, they gave a salute. It is learnt that this action of Khaksars has caused considerable embarrassment to Mr. Rajagopalachari.

50. Confidential DO No. 1661 C from Bihar Secretariat to Conran Smith, Secretary to Government of India, 5 May 1942, about Allowing Processions on Anti-Pakistan Day

GOI Home Political File No. 222/1942, NAI.

My dear Conran Smith,

I am desired to say that the Provincial Government understand that the 10th May is going to be celebrated by the Hindu Mahasabha as the Anti-Pakistan Day throughout the country and public processions will form an important part of the celebrations.

It was such a procession that, last year, was followed by the serious communal riots in the Bihar subdivision in the Patna District. There communal feeling is still very strained and

the bitter memories of last year's riots which followed the anti-Pakistan Day procession are still fresh. Besides Government understand that a large number of Muslim refugees have recently arrived in Bihar Subdivision from the Far East and there has been a brisk sale of lathis. Conversion to Sikhism followed by the adoption of the Kirpal and participation by these Sikhs and Muslims in Hindu party factions is also another development which gives room for anxiety. The Provincial Government are therefore asking the Sub-divisional Officer to prohibit all processions throughout the Subdivision on the 10th May under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code.

Yours sincerely,

Sd. (Illegible)

51. Communal Tension in Parts of Andhra and Tamil Nadu: Fortnightly Report for Madras for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

There was another flare up of communal trouble at Nellore where the situation had been quiet for about a fortnight. On the 11th May some stones were thrown at the jutka of a Muslim and when the driver ran away the jutka was taken away by the Hindus. The next day a Muslim posing as a Hindu took the jutka of a Hindu into a Muslim locality and was set upon by a number of Muslims. The same day a Hindu pedestrian was stabbed.

For some time past there has been tension between the Hindus and the Muslims in the village of Pallapatti in Trichinopoly District. On the 12th May the Sub Inspector of Aravakurichi station was informed by some Hindus that a party of Muslims had illegally impounded their cattle. The Sub Inspector proceeded to the village with a police party but found the Muslims there in a defiant mood. He then returned to the Police Station; but a large crowd of Muslims and Hindus surrounded the station. Some of the Muslims assaulted the Sub Inspector who opened fire in self defence and also ordered two constables to shoot. A Muslim was mortally wounded. There was a free fight between the Muslims and the Hindus in the course of which 9 Muslims and a Hindu were injured.

Hindu Muslim tension is also reported in the north of Madura district where the Hindus are said to have withdrawn their women from work under Muslims and to have since refused to allow even male coolies to work for them. In consequence some Muhammadan tenants of a Hindu Zamindar have refrained from cultivating their land.

52. Muslim Leaguers in Bombay Jubilant over C. Rajagopalachari's Resignation: Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Muslims of the Province in general and the Muslim Leaguers in Bombay City in particular are reported to be jubilant at the resignation of Mr. Rajagopalachari from the Congress Working Committee on the issue of acceptance of the principle of Pakistan. They regard it as a complete vindication of the leadership of Mr. M.A. Jinnah.

53. Cooperation between Congress and Muslim League in Bihar:
Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... At Aurangabad in the Gaya district a mass meeting was held under the auspices of Khan Sahib S.M. Islam, Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha Ex-minister and Maulavi Latiful Rahman, M.L.A., who is in charge of the Muslim League Village Defence propaganda in the province. Speakers advised the audience to organize village defence forces, stop litigation, grow more crops and above all to maintain Hindu-Muslim unity. Similarly at Muzaffarpur, prominent representatives belonging to the Congress and the Muslim League, the National War Front and the Hindu Mahasabha, decided unanimously to form a coordination board for the maintenance of internal security.

54. Communal Propaganda in Nagpur and Buldana District: Extract
from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the First Half of May
1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Mr. Siddique Ali Khan of Nagpur addressed two large Muslim League meetings in connection with his scheme for the migration of Muslims from Hindu mohallas to Muslim mohallas in Nagpur city. Responsible Muslim opinion does not support this move in view of the distress it is likely to cause to the poorer families.

In the Buldana district, the Deputy Commissioner is prosecuting three processionists of a Shiv Jayanti procession who shouted objectionable slogans in Muslim localities in Khamgaon in spite of friendly warnings given to them by the police and magistracy in charge of the procession. Arrests were made on the spot.

55. Hindu Mahasabha Celebration of All-India Independence Day and
Anti-Pakistan Day on 10 May: V.D. Savarkar to Lord Linlithgow,
Bombay, 14 May 1942
TOP, Vol. 2, pp. 85-7.

Your Excellency,

I beg to forward a copy of the resolution passed by hundreds of meetings held at Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, Nagpur, Lucknow, Amritsar, Peshawar, Patna and hundreds of other cities and towns all over India and were attended altogether by not less than a couple of millions of Hindus on the 10th of May last which was observed by the Hindu Mahasabha as the All-India Independence Day and the anti-Pakistan Day.

I hope the resolution will enable the Government to appraise the intensity of the determination of Hindudom as a whole to oppose any scheme like the Pakistan one which seeks to allow freedom for any Province to secede and thus to break up the unity and the integrity of Hindusthan as a consolidated Nation and a centralized State.

Yours sincerely,
V.D. Savarkar

The Resolution passed at the Anti-Pakistan meetings on 10th May 1942:

(1) We, Hindus, reassert our determination to continue the Battle of Freedom which began on this memorable day, the 10th of May, on the eve of our National Rising in 1857, and has been handed down to us from sire to son.

Our methods and means may tactically change from time to time even as they are restricted today to the constitutional and peaceful sphere. But our ideal remains unchanged—the achievement of Swarajya, the absolute political freedom of Hindusthan! And we will continue the fight till this goal is ultimately won!

(2) But the independence of Hindusthan does and must inevitably imply in itself the unity and integrity of it. This unity of Hindusthan, our Motherland, and Holy Land from the Indus to the Seas, had been through a thousand generations of our people, the vision of our seers, the theme of our poets, the mandate of our law-givers and the battle-cry of our warriors—till at last it got identified with the oneness of our National Being itself. To us, Hindus, today this unity of our Motherland is an article of faith, the very life-breath of our National Being.

We, Hindus, take up therefore, a solemn vow today that we will resist, defy and defeat any attempt on the part of the Muslims to carve out any independent Pakistan federation by breaking up this unity of Hindusthan as an integral Nation and a centralized State.

(3) Nevertheless, we also make it clear once more that we, Hindus, are willing to share a common citizenship with all other non-Hindu minorities like the Parsees, Christians, Jews and others who bear patriotic and undivided loyalty to our common country, and stand by its unity as an integral Nation and a centralized State. There shall be constitutional safeguards guaranteeing representation, in proportion to population if it be insisted on by any cultural group. We hope that all our countrymen, irrespective of caste or creed or religion, will realize before long that the interests of everyone of us demand that we should all merge, on such sound and honest, democratic lines and on the basis of such rights and duties of equal citizenship, into a united and independent Hindusthan!

But if in spite of our earnest desire to meet all these requirements which true Nationalist demands, the Muslims try to browbeat the Hindus into yielding to them more than what is due to them in common with all Indian citizens, we Hindusabhaitees in particular and Hindu Sanghatanists in general shall resist them and even the British Government, in case it sides with the Muslims in pursuance of an anti-Hindu Policy. The Hindu Mahasabha does not claim today an inch more for the Hindus than what is due to them on National grounds, and in relation to their population proportions. But we are resolved and proclaim that we shall fight to the bitter end any effort on the part of any one to deprive an inch of what is due to the Hindus in virtue of their population strength and their equal rights held in common with all other Indian citizens.

56. Tamil Nadu Hindu Mahasabha Condemns C. Rajagopalachari's
Proposals: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the
First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Hindu Mahasabha is vehemently opposed to Mr. Rajagopalachari's proposals. An urgent meeting of the Working Committee of the Tamil Nad Hindu Mahasabha was recently held at which resolutions were passed approving the rejection of Cripps' proposals by the All India

Hindu Mahasabha, advocating the formation of a National Government in the Madras Province and condemning Mr. Rajagopalachari's proposals. The Mahasabha proposes to form a Civil Defence Committee with Mr. K.S. Ramaswami Sastry, a retired District Judge as President. About 9 members of the Hindu Mahasabha staged a Black Flag demonstration at the Central Station, Madras when Mr. Rajagopalachari arrived.

57. Hindu Mahasabha 'Shibir' at Poona: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

A Hindu Maha Sabha 'Shibir' was held in Poona from the 1st to 15th May. The object of the 'Shibir' was said to be to train workers for carrying on propaganda in support of the general policy and programme of the Sabha, but lectures with strong communal bias were delivered in camera. The 'Shibir' was opened by an introductory speech by Mr. L.B. Bhopatkar, President of the Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Maha Sabha, and an inaugural address by Rao Bahadur V.L. Thube, a non-Brahmin leader. Mr. N.C. Kelkar also delivered a lecture at the Shibir. About 100 volunteers, mostly Brahmins from the districts and Indian States in Maharashtra, have joined the 'Shibir'.

58. Anti-Pakistan and Independence Day in Bombay Province: Extract from Fortnightly Report
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The 'anti-Pakistan and Independence Day' organized by the Hindu Maha Sabha was observed on May 10th and meetings were held in various places in the Province. In Bombay City the day was observed by organizing small processions in the morning followed by a public meeting in the evening. The meeting was attended by some 20,000 persons and was presided over by Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. At the meeting a lengthy resolution was passed reiterating the Hindu Maha Sabha's demand for independence, reasserting its determination to continue the struggle for freedom 'which began on 10th May 1857', expressing the determination of the Hindus to 'resist, defy and defeat any attempt by the Muslims to carve out any independent Pakistan Federation by breaking up the unity of Hindustan as an integral Nation and centralized State', and declaring that if 'the Musalmans try to browbeat the Hindus into yielding to them more than what is due to them in common with all Indian citizens' they 'shall resist them and even the British Government in case it sides with the Moslem in pursuance of an anti-Hindu policy' and that 'they shall fight to the bitter end any effort on the part of anyone to deprive an inch of what is due to the Hindus in virtue of their population, strength and their equal rights held in common with all other Indian citizens'.

59. Black Flag Demonstration against C. Rajagopalachari in Allahabad; Unruly Behaviour by Congress Volunteers: Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the First Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The unruly behaviour of Congress volunteers led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the occasion of the black flag demonstration against Mr. Rajagopalachari organized by the Hindu

Mahasabha in Allahabad is said to have increased the prestige of that body in the eyes of the Hindu public.

60. Hindu Mahasabha Activities in Bihar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Anti-Pakistan Day was observed on the 10th of May in most of the important centres of the province. Orders under section 144 Criminal Procedure Code had been issued in several districts prohibiting processions and these were generally obeyed except in Patna, where the processionists were dispersed by the police and over 50 arrests were made. There was no prohibition of meetings, except in Begusarai where recently there was serious communal trouble, and Dhanbad. In most of these meetings speeches were made condemning Muslim League policy and passing the anti-Pakistan resolution of the Hindu Mahasabha. The meeting at Patna, which is reported to have been the largest, was presided over by Mr. Rao, Editor of the 'Indian Nation'....

61. Hindu Mahasabha Activities in Nagpur and Other Cities on 10 May 'Independence Day': Extract from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

A number of anti-Pakistan and Independence day meetings were held on the 10th instant. Except at Nagpur and Akola, meetings were not largely attended. The 10th of May is the Hindu Mahasabha 'Independence Day', which is also observed by the Forward Bloc to commemorate the 1857 mutiny. This year the Hindu Mahasabha added anti-Pakistan observance on the same day with, apparently, the object of whipping up more communal enthusiasm on the occasion. In Nagpur, rumours were afloat for some days previously that the effigy of Mr. Jinnah would be taken out by the Hindus in procession and would be burnt. This rumour appears to have been set in circulation by the Muslims, as investigation proved that the Hindu Mahasabha organizers had no intention of creating communal trouble in this fashion. Actually, no procession was taken out in Nagpur, but some small Prabhat Pheris were taken out in the morning with a 'Bhagwa Flag'. Some of the people in these small processions shouted out communal slogans including the offensive one '*Hindustan Hinduon ka, nahi kisike bap ka*'. A public meeting attended by about 1,000 persons was held in the Town Hall in the evening, and it was presided over by Mr. M.N. Ghatate, a landlord of some prominence. The speakers explained the object of the day and criticized the Pakistan scheme and passed the resolution supplied by the central organization. There was some apprehension in Amraoti that a communal clash might occur on that day, but nothing materialized as no processions were taken out, either by the Hindu Mahasabha or by the Muslim League.



62. RSS Activities in CP and Berar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... The Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh ... held its annual summer classes in Nagpur and volunteers numbering about 600 from all over India attended to receive training and instructions in regard to the objects and aims of the organization....

Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh Camps were also held in Wardha, Sausar, Khandwa, Raipur and Akola and the total number attending these camps was over 2,000. Training was given in lathi drill, physical exercises and games.

63. Question Box: Congress and League

Harijan, 17 May 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, p. 93.

Q. Maulana Saheb has made what I consider a very wise and patriotic suggestion that the Congress Working Committee will nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League when the latter so desire to do so. I trust it will commend itself to you. If it does, I should like you publicly to support it. It will go a long way to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together.

A. I have no hesitation in endorsing Maulana Saheb's suggestion. No one would be more glad than I if, with or without my endorsement, the two can come together. I have always felt that there is something radically wrong with both that the most obvious thing, viz., the coming together of the wise men of both with a will to find a solution of the deadlock, has not happened.

64. Wrong in Principle: Editorial

The Tribune, 19 May 1942.

'I have no hesitation in endorsing Maulana Azad's suggestion that the Congress Working Committee will nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League when the latter so desire to do,' writes Mahatma Gandhi in *Harijan*. It will be recalled that Maulana Azad's suggestion was that five representatives of the Congress Working Committee should meet an equal number of representatives of the Muslim League for the purpose of effecting a settlement between the Congress and the League. Mahatma Gandhi has only referred to 'the representatives of the League' and has not specified their number. Should the League, however, be permitted to nominate the same number of representatives as the Congress does, as far as the immediate task they will have in hand, that is, thrashing out the problem and devising way to effect an agreement, is concerned, the equality of representation that the Muslim League will have with the Congress will be a matter of little importance. But if it is construed by the Muslim League as a precedent to be incorporated in India's constitution itself, exception must be taken to it. For it is wrong and undemocratic in principle to accord the same quantitative representation in governmental bodies to the Muslim League as to the Congress. Even if the Muslim League is considered to be the sole representative of the Muslim community—which is a totally wrong assumption—to give the same representation to it in the government of the country as to the Congress would amount to the placing of twenty-five per cent or less of the population of India on a basis of equality with sixty-five per cent or more. It

seems to us that the very approach to the question of a Hindu–Muslim settlement in its domestic aspect by means of a Congress–League agreement is erroneous. For the Muslim League on its own showing is a representative of the Muslims as Muslims; the Congress represents Hinds and Muslims alike as Indians. The Congress does in no sense represent the Hindus, even if the large majority of Indians owe allegiance to it, as Hindus. It is obvious, therefore, that if there is to be a settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims as communities, it cannot be effected by an agreement between the Congress and the League alone. The Hindus, as Hindus, while they owe undoubted allegiance to the national ideology of the Congress in so far as it represents India as a political and a national entity, have organized themselves through other organizations for the protection of their rights in the same manner in which the Muslim League claims to protect the rights of the Muslims as such. A Congress–League agreement, if it seeks to adjust the rights of the Indian communities *inter se* will have, therefore, little or no sanction from these organizations....

65. Muslim League Championing Khaksar Cause in Punjab: Extract
from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Provincial Muslim League has recently been championing the *Khaksar* cause, and organized two well-attended meetings at Lahore and Amritsar on the 10th of May at which Pakistan propaganda was combined with demands for the release of Allama Mashriqui, and the removal of the ban on the *Anjuman-i-Khaksaran*. Meanwhile, the League's relations with the *Majlis-Ahrar* are improving, and the Working Committee of the Provincial *Majlis* has recently passed a resolution appealing to the All-India *Ahrar* Working Committee to 'devise ways and means for Hindu-Muslim unity and not to oppose the League demand.'

66. The Dangerous Idea of Pakistan: Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech at a
Public Meeting in Lahore, 21 May 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 320–5.

I regret that the lesson which we had learnt during the last twenty years of discussing matters among ourselves and then arriving at certain decisions to be implemented by all concerned, and acting together as one man, is being forgotten even by the topmost Congressmen. I have no quarrel with those who want to stand for certain principles but it is as well a good principle to express one's opinion on a matter, participate in discussions with others and after a decision is taken to stand by it and act unitedly. One reason why the Congress in Punjab is weak is that even though the province has some of the bravest men, their fault was that they never learnt to act unitedly even after decisions had been taken.

Very recently another event has happened in the Congress. Mr. Rajagopalachari has drifted away from the Congress. From what he has been saying in his public utterances recently, I cannot say whether Rajaji would even remain in the Congress.

Rajaji possesses a very keen intellect but that intellect is of no use when he wants to cripple the weapon which the country has forged to achieve India's freedom as a result of twenty-two years of hard work and innumerable sacrifices.

It pains me to enter into a controversy with an erstwhile colleague but I am doing so because it pains me even more to see Rajagopalachari pursuing the path which he is now treading. That path is not only wrong but positively dangerous to the country and by following that path Rajaji is making the achievement of that object difficult for which he himself is working. In fact, Rajaji has acted in this manner in his anxiety to form a national government in Madras. Now a national government in a province, especially in the province of Madras, cannot be formed without first admitting before the Governor and the Governor-General that it was a folly to have come out of office. In these days of war, however, any government in any province, and particularly in Madras, will not be able to do anything beyond perhaps getting some drinking water served to the thirsty or giving to the hungry a loaf of bread to eat. During these days in any danger zone not the national government but the military shall rule.

Rajaji has acted most irresponsibly by getting a resolution passed by a provincial legislature party at a time when only a few days after a meeting of the Working committee was to be held, and he has thus been responsible for dividing the Congress into two camps. My only satisfaction is that Rajaji has not succeeded, and no section of the Congress is with him. Rajaji has chosen a very wrong time for his move and his action has added to the difficulties which are not a few already. There are a few persons who are now issuing statements in support of Mr. Rajagopalachari. It is surprising that being in the Congress they are trying to explain their position individually as if they cannot remain without opening their hearts. The statement issued by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee is a case in point.

I and those who are with me stand by the Delhi resolution of the Congress Working Committee.¹ The very idea of dividing India is revolting to my conception of India. I have no hesitation in saying that those who talk of Pakistan these days are befooling the people. The picture of India which I had drawn in my mind received a rude shock at the very idea of the division of the country. Being a socialist, I think that in the present age no one can afford to live separately, and for the betterment of all, the countries must act unitedly. Instead of accepting the plea for the division of India I have been looking forward to the day when we shall have a federation of Iran, Afghanistan, India and China. I want to make it clear that according to the Delhi resolution no one can be forced to remain in any form of government, though, again, it is a different matter by what method it is to be ascertained whether or not a particular section wants to remain with the whole.

I feel that young men here are raising slogans. Remember, that the days of raising slogans has passed away. At a time when two armies are fighting with each other, slogans will never serve any purpose. I, therefore, ask you to change this mentality. There is no need to scoff at the successful retreats of the British forces from some places. It is not in good taste to ridicule others when you are not doing anything yourself and when the others are in any case fighting for their own Empire. No one can say how we will act if and when similar opportunity arises.

In the general present political situation, we can visualize great upheavals during the next six months and I want the people to be prepared to meet the situation as it might arise. Already, as you know, some of the Indian towns have been attacked by the enemy aircraft. If we do not learn to face the situation we may be perplexed when an emergency arises.

To get freedom from the British has become easier because British imperialism cannot survive the present War. British imperialism is vanishing before our eyes. But that does not mean that if we succeed against British imperialism we shall have nothing else to fear. We will have to fight other imperialisms and defend ourselves against aggression from any quarter. It pains

me to see a handful of powers treating us as a commodity and deciding amongst themselves as to who should possess that commodity.

You should remember that *inquilab* is coming and we should be prepared to welcome it despite the fact that it is bound to upset the present order of things. I am amused at the talk of establishment of Pakistan these days for I think that events are taking place with such rapidity that no one can say whether those who raise the cry of Pakistan or those who are against it will survive. The next six months or a little more shall witness such upheavals that the face of the whole world will be changed. The war which is now being fought between Germany and Russia and the war that may be fought in India will have decisive results. In the eventful days to come, it would be only the Congress which would be able to lead the country, but might be that even the Congress might fail to render useful service to the people. I, therefore, ask you not to do anything that would in any way weaken the Congress. The Muslim League cannot do anything. The League has no constructive programme. The Muslim League, even though there are some brave men in that organization, is out to pursue only a negative policy as opposed to that of the Congress.

There are some who are in the habit of looking to Whitehall and weighing the words uttered by Mr. Amery or Mr. Churchill. Such people should remember that the question of India's freedom no longer rests with Mr. Amery or Mr. Churchill. It has gone out of their hands. It will be decided by the world events which are taking place. Amerys and Churchills can undoubtedly create difficulties. They can even raise imaginary barriers and disturb the peace, like a few men disturbing a big gathering, if it suits them.

During the Cripps–Congress negotiations, I accepted some impossible things but I and those who were with me, found out very soon that those in power in Britain still possessed the mind and mentality of the Victorian period and I came to a definite conclusion that it was impossible to arrive at any settlement with the British rulers. My sympathies are with the Allies, especially because of China, to which country I took a goodwill message, assuring it of India's full support in its struggle against Japanese aggression. So I am pained to take up the attitude of not helping Britain in this War—under the present circumstances especially when China is in difficulty. I want to help China, but my country and myself are not in a position to help it. All doors have been banged shut against India by the British die-hards and if any is left open it is a door through which no one with any self-respect would like to enter. The British Government wants from us recruits and money. But we do not know how to give that help. The government is getting recruits, and money is also being collected from our poor country. But one thing has been proved beyond doubt that the British method of dealing with India is worthless. Even in the matter of war, the policy and methods are those of the nineteenth century. If we had been given an opportunity we would have made India a citadel and prepared every man to be a soldier to defend his country against any aggressor. Those living in palatial buildings in New Delhi and enjoying their tea at 4.15 every evening and dinner at 8.15 every night can never create that enthusiasm among the people even if they are competent, which in fact they are not.

You should learn to keep up your courage and have brave hearts to face any situation. You should develop self-sufficiency and self-protection. Both these things, which form the keynote of the Congress constructive programme, are meant for the people of all communities. People should learn to act unitedly and stand by each other in time of any emergency and protect the life and property of their neighbours, irrespective of any distinction.

Tired with the long and unending negotiations which we had in Delhi and worried with the events that had taken place in India, I ran to the majestic Himalayas and there, as usual, gathered strength and inspiration from those snow-clad high and lovely peaks. I have come back refreshed and with greater vigour. I do not know whether or not world events would give me another opportunity to meet the brave Punjabis. But, in conclusion, I want to assure you that though not a religious person, a faith has grown in me that in the upheaval which is to come during the next few months India will become free.

¹ This resolution, drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru, was handed over to Stafford Cripps on 2 April 1942 and released to the press on 11 April 1942. For further details, see section on the Cripps Mission.

67. Hindu Mahasabha Plans to Raise Volunteers: Extracts from
Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

A general meeting of the Provincial Maha Sabha was held in Poona on May 16th and 17th. It was presided over by Mr. L.B. Bhopatkar and about 65 members were present. Mr. Bhopatkar appealed for the collection of a sum of two lacs of rupees, the formation of a dal of 5,000 volunteers and the enlistment of 2,00,000 members in the Sabha. Mr. Sawarkar, who also addressed the meeting, advised that Militarization Mandals should be formed in every district to work in co-ordination with local officers and every effort should be made to raise the Hindu percentage in the Army as high as possible.

68. Hindu Mahasabha in Champaran: Extract from Fortnightly Report
for Bihar for the Second Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

A District Conference of the Sabha was held at Bagaha in the Champaran district at which Mr. Ganganand Singh presided. He defined the Hindu attitude as one of undiluted nationalism and of opposition to three forces, one the Muslim League, who wished to dominate the Hindu majority, the second the British Government, who were siding with the Muslims in order to continue their domination over India, and the third the Congress, which had sacrificed Hindu rights in order to placate the Muslims. He called upon the Hindus to enlist in the army in large numbers in order that they might be in a position to preserve their independence after the war. Resolutions passed included—

- (1) demanding the recall from abroad of all Indian troops; and
- (2) the issue of fire arms to responsible citizens with a view to assisting the police in protective measures.



69. Nationalist Muslims' Suggestions after Congress Rejection of Cripps Proposals: Letter from M.M. Ismail, Nagore, to the Congress President, 24 May 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. G-35/1942, NMML.

Sir,

The following resolution was unanimously passed in a public meeting held here yesterday under the auspices of the Nationalist Muslim Youths, when Janab P.S. Dawood was in the chair. I have been authorized by the president to communicate the same to you. The resolution runs as follows:-

'This meeting, while whole-heartedly supporting the stand taken by the Congress with regard to the British Government's draft proposals for the constitutional settlement of India brought to this country by Sir Stafford Cripps and severely condemning the distrusting and unhelpful attitude of the British Government towards India displayed in the performances of Sir Stafford Cripps both in India and afterwards in England and of Mr. L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, requests the President and the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress to take the initiative as the premier political organization of the country, to convene a conference of the representatives of the Muslim League, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Liberals, the Sikhs and the Depressed Classes, the major political parties of India, with a view to evolve a united and agreed demand for the formation of a true National Government for India, with full powers over the defence of the country, for the period of the war, without prejudicing even in the least the views of the various political parties on the future constitution of India, in order to vindicate to the world, and give a concrete shape to, the claim made by the Congress President in his letter to Sir Stafford Cripps dated 10th April 1942, that "We (the Congress Working Committee) would point out to you that the suggestions we have put forward are not ours only but may be considered to be the unanimous demand of the Indian people".'

The resolution was moved by me and was seconded by Janab M.E. Nawab Sahib Manicar, Municipal Vice-Chairman.

Thanking you,
Yours faithfully,

M.M. Ismail

70. M.A. Jinnah on League's Achievements: It Has Undone in Three Years What Congress Has Done in Thirty Years
The Bombay Chronicle, 30 May 1942.

A categorical declaration that the Muslims all over India were solidly united in their demand of Pakistan was made by Mr. M.A. Jinnah in the course of his speech at a Muslim mass meeting convened by the Bombay Provincial Muslim League at Kaiser Baug, Dongri, on Friday night. The Chairman and the members of the All-India Muslim League Defence Committee were present on the occasion, and addressed the gathering on 'Civil Defence'. Mr. I.I. Chundrigar, presided.

In the course of his speech, Mr. Jinnah stated that about two years back he was asked by an American as to why he as a leader of such a war-like community as Muslims did not offer

his assistance in the work of self-defence. The speaker had replied that the Government had disarmed the whole country and hence they were unable to offer any assistance in the defence work.

Since then, continued the speaker, he had realized that something needed to be done for the protection of the Muslims. Steps were to be taken so that they might not be caught napping if the country was really bombarded, and casualties occurred.

For that reason only was their Civil Defence Committee appointed, and he appealed to all Muslims to support its efforts.

Referring to the rapid progress of the Muslim League, he said, it had undone in three years what the Congress had done in the course of thirty years spending crores of rupees. After Cripps' visit to India the 'Shadow of Pakistan' had slowly become clear to the Congress eye. Even Gandhiji had said that if Muslims wanted Pakistan nothing could prevent them from achieving it. Pandit Nehru had also begun to realize that Muslims as a whole were an unwilling party to any union with the Hindus. A staunch Congressman like Mr. Rajagopalachari had the courage to admit that Muslims had to be granted their demand.

Concluding, Mr. Jinnah emphatically declared that the Muslims would never rest content until they had achieved their demand of Pakistan.

Nawab Mohamed Ismail Khan, the Chairman of the Muslim League Civil Defence Committee stated that the Committee after its appointment had toured round many districts of Bengal and Assam and everywhere they were enthusiastically received by the Muslim population.

League's Achievement

Chaudhri Khaliquzzaman stated that the organization of the Muslim League had roused the consciousness of the Muslims. It had grown so much in strength that even Sir Stafford Cripps was obliged to admit it as the only powerful political organization of the Muslims in India.

Sir Nazimuddin stated that even Bengal was not free from the fear of the Japanese attack, but the Civil Defence Committee of the Muslim had properly organized their defence.

Mr. Mohamed Issa said Pakistan had become more or less a certainty. He appealed to the Muslim youths to organize solidly and offer every possible sacrifice for achieving Pakistan.

Mr. Chundrigar who presided traced the origin of the All-India Muslim League Defence Committee, and said that its members had come to Bombay to discuss the measures to be taken for the protection of the Muslims in an emergency.

71. M.A. Jinnah Asks Bombay Muslims Not to Give Way to Panic:
Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Muslim League organized a large public meeting in Bombay on 29th May. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Jinnah and members of the League Civil Defence Committee. In his speech, Mr. Jinnah is reported to have appealed to the Muslims of Bombay not to give way to panic but to render help to their kith and kin and to enroll themselves in thousands in the Muslim National Guards with a view to protecting their hearths and homes in emergencies.



72. Muslim League Leaders in Cuttack: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Nawab Ismail Khan, Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman and Muhammad Isa Khan of the All India Muslim League Defence committee arrived at Cuttack on the 15th May and met prominent Muslims of the town. A Provincial League was formed and a branch of the Defence Committee was also constituted with some prominent local Muslim gentlemen as members. A meeting was also held under the presidentship of the Hon'ble Mr. Sobhan Khan, Minister for Law, Health and Revenue, where the visitors explained the objects of Pakistan and appealed to the Muslims to form branches of the League in every part of the Province to safeguard the interests of their community.

73. Asaf Ali's Reaction to Statements of Muslim Leaguers

The Times of India, 5 June 1942.

New Delhi, June 4

Mr. Asaf Ali in a statement to the Press says:

'Nawab Ismail Khan and Choudhury Khaliq-uz-Zaman's latest pronouncements question the basis of a Congress-League understanding even after the Congress president's open offer. They seem to overlook the Nagpur resolution of the League, which clearly contemplates the postponement of post-war issues and provides for an interim agreement. If the very idea of a contact is resisted by one party until even its contestable demands are previously conceded, the very object of joint deliberation disappears. The non-League Muslims whose share in the public life of the community is by no means inconsiderable have never ceased to regard the scheme of segregation nearly half the population of the Indian Muslims as a perilous adventure, fatally prejudicial to the interests of the Muslims themselves.

Their alternative is the fullest territorial autonomy within a common federal structure for India. To insist that they should surrender their considered views without even an attempt at a joint consultation is to think in terms of dictatorial coercion. It would be worse if a great political organization representing a variety of views were expected to surrender its judgment without being heard. After all people may hold diametrically opposite views and yet a consultation in a helpful spirit may result in a common measure of agreement on vital points.

It would be passing strange for the residents of a common country not to find any common basis for co-operation in the face of a common danger, while it is possible for Britain, America, China and Russia who are geographically and ideologically poles asunder to find it essential for sheer self-preservation to act together.

It would be a tragedy, indeed, if the destiny of the Indian Muslims rested on a method of political bargaining which has all the weakness of infructuous obstinacy.



74. Excerpts from Louis Fischer's Interview with M.K. Gandhi,
6 June 1942, about the Communal Problem
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 433–6.

.... I asked Gandhi about Rajaji's programme.

G. I don't know what his proposals are. I think it unfortunate that he should argue against me and that I should argue with him, so I have given order that, as far as we are concerned, the discussion should be suspended. But the fact is that I do not know what Rajaji proposes.

G. I don't know what his proposals are. I think it unfortunate that he should argue against me and that I should argue with him, so I have given order that, as far as we are concerned, the discussion should be suspended. But the fact is that I do not know what Rajaji proposes.

L.F. Isn't the essence of his scheme that the Hindus and Muslims collaborate and in common work perhaps discover the technique of peaceful co-operation?

G. Yes. But that is impossible. As long as the third power, England, is here, our communal differences will continue to plague us. Far back, Lord Minto, then Viceroy, declared that the British had to keep Muslims and Hindus apart in order to facilitate the domination of India.

I told Gandhi I had seen the Minto quotation.

G. This has been the principle of British rule ever since.

L.F. I have been told that when Congress ministries were in office in the province, during 1937, 1938 and 1939, they discriminated against Muslims.

G. The British governors of those provinces have officially testified that is not so.

L.F. But isn't it a fact that in the United Provinces, Congress and the Muslims entered into an electoral pact because Congress was not sure of winning, that, then, Congress won a sweeping victory and refused to form a coalition with the Muslims?

G. No. There were four Muslim ministers in the United Provinces Government formed by Congress. There were no representatives of the Muslim League, but there were Muslims. No. We have always tried to collaborate with Muslims. It is said that the Maulana is a puppet in our hands. Actually, he is the dictator of Congress. He is its president. But the Cripps proposals have divided Hindus from Muslims more than ever. Thanks to the British Government, the divergence between the communities has been widened.

L.F. It was sad that Congress leaders and Muslim Leaguers came to New Delhi to talk to Cripps, and talked to Cripps but did not talk to one another.

G. It was not only sad, it was disgraceful. But it was the fault of the Muslim League. Shortly after the war broke out, we were summoned to meet the Viceroy at New Delhi. Rajendra Prasad and I went to speak for Congress, and Mr. Jinnah for the Muslim league. I asked Jinnah to confer with us in advance and face the British Government unitedly. We agreed to meet in New Delhi, but when I suggested that we both demand independence for India he said, 'I do not want independence'. We could not agree. I urged that we at least make the appearance of unity by going to the Viceroy together; I said he could go in my car or I would go in his. He consented to have me go in his car. But we spoke to the Viceroy in different tones and expressed different views.

In actual life, it is impossible to separate us into two nations. We are not two nations. Every Muslim will have a Hindu name if he goes back far enough in his family history. Every

Muslim is merely a Hindu who has accepted Islam. That does not create nationality. If some influential Christian divine converted us all to Christianity, we should not become one nation if we really were two nations, and in the same matter the two religions of India do not make two nationalities. Europe is Christian, but Germany and England, so much alike in culture and language, are grimly at one another's throats. We in India have a common culture. In the north, Hindi and Urdu are understood by both Hindus and Muslims. In Madras, Hindus and Muslims speak Tamil, and in Bengal they both speak Bengali and neither Hindi nor Urdu. When communal riots take place, they are always provoked by incidents over cows and by religious processions. That means that it is our superstitions that create the trouble and not our separate nationalities.

L.F. Caroe¹ and Jenkins² told me that there were no communal differences in the villages, and I heard from others too that the relations between the two religious communities are peaceful in the villages. If that is so, that is very important because India is ninety per cent village.

G. It is so, and that of course proves that the people are not divided. It proves that the politicians divide us.

L.F. The Muslim bartender in my hotel in New Delhi said to me—although he is a member of the Muslim League and an advocate of Pakistan that the communal troubles always started where Muslims were a minority and never where the Hindus were a minority.

G. Fischer, you have been here only for a short time. You cannot study everything. But if you make any investigations and find that we are wrong or guilty, please say so in a loud voice.

... I began my interview with Gandhi this afternoon by reading this passage³ to him. I said it confirmed his statement to me this morning that the Muslim people are much less interested in separatism than their leaders.

G. Of course.

L.F. But how real are the fears of the Muslim leaders? Perhaps they understand better than the Muslim masses that the Hindus desire to dominate. Can you say quite objectively that the Hindus have not tried to gain the upper hand?

G. Here and there, individuals may entertain regrettable ideas. But I can say that the Congress movement and the Hindus in general have no desire to control. The provinces must enjoy broad autonomy. I myself am opposed to violence or domination and do not believe in powerful governments which oppress their citizens or other States. So how could I wish for domination? This charge is a cry originated by leaders to obtain a better hold on their people....

¹ Olaf Kirkpatrick Caroe, Secretary, External Affairs Department, who worked for many years as a British official in the Punjab.

² Sir Evan Jenkins, Secretary, Department of Supplies.

³ From the Indian statutory Commission Report, Vol. I, which read:

There is among the Hindu minority in Sind a feeling that the independence of the British Commissioner is too great, while on the Muhammadan side there is a well-known cry for separation from Bombay. This demand that gathered strength not so much in the homes of the people or among the Muhammadan cultivators of Sind, as among the leaders of Muhammadan thought all over India to whom the idea of a new Muslim province, contiguous to the predominantly Muslim areas of Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province, and the Punjab, naturally appeals as offering a stronghold against the fear of Hindu domination.



75. Jawaharlal Nehru to Allama Mashriqi¹ about Negotiations with the Muslim League, 12 June 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 515–16.

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,

Thank you for your telegram which I have received today. I do not quite understand it. As you know we shall gladly do everything in our power to bring about a friendly settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as other organizations. The obvious way to bring this about is for representatives to discuss the matter. That is why the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, suggested some time ago that such representatives might be appointed on behalf of the Congress and the League. The number of representatives is immaterial, though probably it will be better if there were several on each side. Before the Congress can take definite steps in the matter, it should know whether the Muslim League is agreeable to the suggestion made. From certain speeches made by the Muslim League leaders, it would appear that they are not agreeable. Your telegram is vague and it is difficult for any step to be taken till we have more definite and direct knowledge of the Muslim League attitude.

Yours sincerely,
 Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ The Khaksar leader who was released from jail earlier in the year.

76. Muslim Aid to War Effort: Conditional Support by M.A. Jinnah
The Times of India, 19 June 1942.

In a recent interview to the International News Service of America, Mr. M.A. Jinnah pledged that the 100 million Muslims of India would resist Japanese aggression 'men, women and children with tooth and claw.' He, however, predicted that such resistance would be ineffective against the armed forces of the invaders and coupled his pledge with the renewed plea for independent Muslim States in post-war India and for the arming of Muslim men of military age. He said: 'If we had such an assured goal to fight for and arms with which to fight, we would stand side by side with British forces and hurl the enemy out of India with invincible strength.'

A note of bitterness crept in his voice while discussing the Congress action. He said: 'The Congress is engaging in political blackmail, taking advantage of the fact that the enemy is almost at India's door, to attempt to force the British go agree to the so-called National Government, in which the Muslims would be out-numbered three-to-one and would be ruled by Hindus as they were now being ruled by the British. Muslims will never agree to such an arrangement. They insist on independence from the British, from the Japanese invaders and from Hindus. If Britain agreed to the Congress demand and approved a national State dominated by Hindus, there would be immediate and terrible chaos.'

Mr. Jinnah said that he understood fully American sympathy to the principle of independence of India, but he asserted that true independence could only come through Pakistan with a separate Muslim State or States in north-west and eastern sections, where Muslims were approximately 75 per cent of the population.

One-Fourth Area for Muslims

‘That is certainly fair,’ said Mr. Jinnah: It would give Muslims one-fourth of the total population. It would leave the Hindus with three-fourths of the area, comprising the richest part of the country, and would give them the most populous country in the world except China and perhaps Russia.

‘Were I a Hindu leader, I would say “let us get this chap Jinnah to sign his proposition quick,”’ asserted Mr. Jinnah. ‘Then we will be a tremendous Hind country without a minority problem, which always prevents national unity.’

Mr. Jinnah charged the Congress with bad faith in putting forward claims to represent Muslim interests as well as those of the Hindus. ‘It is entirely to confuse the rest of the world and to win sympathy,’ said Mr. Jinnah. ‘Maulana Azad is a puppet President who has permitted himself to be used and who has no power in the Congress which is completely Hindu in thought and action.’

Mr. Jinnah believed that Britain and the Hindus would eventually be forced to recognize his plan, which was the only practical solution of India’s problem. When that happened, he pledged that he would appoint himself champion of the small Hindu minorities living in Muslim areas and insist that the constitution should accord them full rights. If the Hindus did the same to the Muslim minorities in their three-quarters of India, the two countries should live amicably as good neighbours like Canada and the United States and Mexico and North America, which no one suggested should be forced to live under one Government merely because they are in the same continent.

The Hindu three-fourths of India where the policy of non-cooperation with the enemy and non-violence is proclaimed, include the strategic ports of Madras and Bombay. The Muslim region, where Mr. Jinnah said would fight aggression preferably with proper arms but lacking that with bare hands, includes Karachi, Chittagong and Calcutta, which are nearest to Burma, where the Japanese are massed.

77. Muslim League Activities in Kohat

The Times of India, 19 June 1942.

Kohat, June 17

Members of the Muslim Civil Defence Committee, headed by Nawab Ismail Khan, arrived in Kohat last evening, motoring through Adamkhel, Afridi tribal territory. They visited en route the Kohat Pass and saw tribesmen at work manufacturing arms with the crudest tools imaginable. On arrival at Kohat they discussed plans to strengthen the Muslim League organization with local workers and advised them to set up a local defence committee and enroll a large number of national guards.

Speaking at a public meeting, Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman delivered a warning to the Congress that the Muslim League would oppose the civil disobedience movement if it were launched with a view to destroying the after-effects of the Cripps Mission and Mr. Rajagopalachari’s plea for the recognition of the legitimate claim of Muslims for separation.

The Congress High Command, he said, was showing consternation at the fact that the Muslim League was nearing its goal, and the talks at Wardha indicated that they were planning some sort of action, ostensibly against the British, whom they declared they would not embarrass.

Probably the proposed satyagraha would only be manoeuvre to jeopardize Pakistan. God knows Muslim league motives and readiness to make sacrifices.

Pakistan as a tangible proposition, he added had now come to be appreciated and understood in all countries like America, Turkey, Egypt, Persia, and Afghanistan.

Qazi Mohd. Isa said: 'The war has now come to India and it should be our foremost duty to organize volunteers in order to lessen the sufferings and hardships of people in war time. Although we have not been able to take part in the first line defence, we should not neglect our second line of defence.' The delegation left for Bannu today.

78. M.K. Gandhi: Hindu-Muslim Unity after the End of British Rule in India: Interview to *The Hindu* before 11 June 1942

Harijan, 21 June 1942.

Q. Till the last day you said there can be no swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. Now why is it that you say that there will be no unity until India has achieved independence?

A. Time is a merciless enemy, if it is also a merciful friend and healer. I claim to be amongst the oldest lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity and I remain one even today. I have been asking myself why every whole-hearted attempt made by all including myself to reach unity has failed, and failed so completely that I have entirely fallen from grace and am described by some Muslim papers as the greatest enemy of Islam in India. It is a phenomenon I can only account for by the fact that the third power, even without deliberately wishing it, will not allow real unity to take place. Therefore I have come to the reluctant conclusion that the two communities will come together almost immediately after the British power comes to a final end in India. If independence is the immediate goal of the Congress and the League then, without needing to come to any terms, all will fight together to be free from bondage. When the bondage is done with, not merely the two organizations but all parties will find it to their interest to come together and make the fullest use of the liberty in order to evolve a national government suited to the genius of India. I do not care what it is called. Whatever it is, in order to be stable, it has to represent the masses in the fullest sense of the term. And, if it is to be broad-based upon the will of the people, it must be predominantly non-violent.

Anyway, up to my last breath, I hope I shall be found working to that end, for I see no hope for humanity without the acceptance of non-violence. We are witnessing the bankruptcy of violence from day to day. There is no hope for humanity if the senseless fierce mutual slaughter is to continue.

Harijan, 21-6-1942

79. B.S. Moonje Condemns Pakistan Move

The Times of India, 22 June 1942.

Coimbatore, June 20

Presiding over the third session of the Tamil Nad Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. B.S. Moonje referred to the Cripps proposals, which, according to him, meant partition of India into several smaller sovereign states, so that they might be kept quarrelling among themselves, thus helping the British to keep the Indian army.

The Cripps Mission had assured Muslims that Britain was prepared to concede Pakistan and had strengthened their hands. He reiterated that it was the intention of Muslims to establish an Islamic State in India.

He condemned Mr. Rajagopalachari's attempt, which, he said, was humiliating to Hindus and he was sure it would result in a bloody civil war if the insidious propaganda were allowed to be continued.

Replying to Mr. Rajagopalachari's argument that he wanted to defend India against Japanese aggression Dr. Moonje stated that the former Madras premier could not do it, as Sir Stafford Cripps had refused to allow the defence question to be handled by Indians.

The President stressed that his own considered opinion was that guerilla warfare was the best defence against an invasion, but Government had stated that they had not enough rifles. Out of a population of more than 30 crores, India could easily train a guerilla army of 10, 500,000. But his demand was for only 1,000,000 men on the average of 100,000 from each province.

Advice to People

Continuing, Dr. Moonje advised the people not to get panicky and not to listen to Mr. Rajagopalachari. Even if Pakistan was conceded, there would be no Hindu-Muslim unity. He suggested that Indians should think in terms of Hindustan and not Pakistan and appealed to them to rally round the Hindu Mahasabha. Japan could not conquer India and the British Empire. India would come out of the ordeal unscathed and with added glory.

Dr. Moonje arrived here this morning and was accorded a rousing reception. He was profusely garlanded and taken in procession.

Prior to the conference, Dr. Moonje, in a special message, says: 'I appeal to Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Jinnah to keep their balance of mind. After all they are brothers in blood, though they may differ in their religions. Like the Buddhists and Muslims of China, who are also, brothers in blood, the Hindus and Muslims of India should also behave as such. This controversy will not bring any particular gain to Muslims, but if persisted in will end in bloody disturbances. But if such be the intention of Providence, I appeal to Hindus to be prepared and at the end to embrace Muslims as their brothers, without any feeling of rancour or hatred.'

Mr. V.D. Savarkar, president of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, in a message to the conference hoped that it would inaugurate and press on the anti-Pakistan campaign under the joint auspices of all Hindu organizations agreed on the common point of defending the unity and integrity of Hindustan, 'our motherland and holy land.'

80. Sikandar-Baldev Singh Pact: Editorial

The Tribune, 22 June 1942.

We have deliberately refrained from commenting on the negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the pact between the Unionists and Sardar Baldev Singh. We have done so, because the professed object of the entente, namely, the promotion of communal harmony, so necessary at this juncture in India's history, was laudable; and until the terms of the pact were known, any attempt to examine their implications, in terms of the forecasts that were made from time to time, might, in our opinion, have prejudiced the success of the negotiations. There is much in the political philosophy, if any, of the Unionist Party and its administrative methods with which we profoundly disagree but, until an alternative Government aiming clearly at the

avoidance of the defects from which the Unionist Party's politics and administration suffer is possible, any effort that is made by the existing Government to promote communal harmony, even if it is not far-reaching in terms of results, should be welcome for its own sake. Besides, there was the hope that the terms of the pact might deal with some of the fundamental causes of the communal problem. This hope has in a large measure remained unfulfilled. Such questions as *Jhatka* 'meat' and the teaching of Gurmukhi touch the religious susceptibilities and rights of the communities. Undoubtedly they need settlement, but what is more fundamental is the system of communal representation in services and other causes of division, some of which form an integral part of the political ideology of the Unionist Party. These would remain untouched by the pact.

All that the contracting parties have agreed to is that the Sikhs shall get their due share in the services and further controversial legislation shall be avoided. Surely, a more straightforward and, in fact, the only effective way of promoting communal harmony in the province would have been to eliminate the poison of communal representation itself from the life of this province. Nor can the promise that there will be no further controversial legislation go very far in helping the participants to the pact to achieve their professed object, for the existing discriminatory legislation cannot but continue to embitter certain sections of the community. One would have thought that if the Unionists were serious about the promotion of communal harmony, they would first do away with all professional antagonisms, which are often a cloak to hide communal ambitions, and would aim at economic policies designed to create opportunities for the development of all irrespective of caste, creed or profession. But their minds, unfortunately, do not work in its direction. Even their sincere attempts to tackle the communal problem cannot, therefore, amount to anything more than tinkering with it.

Something is, however, better than nothing and the assurance that controversial measures will be avoided should prevent further embitterment. Had the pact dealt with fundamental policies, or had a coalition arrangement between the Unionists and the Sikhs been made it would have been possible to visualize the future. Now the Premier has only re-defined his policy on certainly purely religious questions that exercise the minds of the Sikhs and has promised to maintain the *status quo* in regard to them. Nor have the Akalis as a party led by Master Tara Singh joined the Government; they have only given the pact their 'blessing' and presumably the Congress Akalis have not even done that. Whether the status quo itself in its manifold aspects does not contain the germs of communal bitterness and whether the qualified support that Master Tara Singh has given to the pact will actually result in the establishment of the professed object of its framers, apart from less obvious things, such as the natural anxiety of the Unionist leaders to perpetuate their leadership, the future alone can tell. Indeed, in the absence of any positive political programme in the pact and because of the hybrid politically indefinable nature of the Akali-Unionist alliance, much will depend upon how the persons concerned with it work it out in practice. As far as the contemplated change as a result of the pact in the personnel of the Cabinet is concerned, there is no doubt that the replacement of S. Dasaundha Singh by S. Baldev Singh should be a decided improvement.



81. Fazlul Huq's Revolt against Muslim League: Editorial

The Tribune, 22 June 1942.

Mr. Fazlul Huq has rightly raised the banner of revolt against the Muslim League. Many of the Muslim leaders will have no hesitation in sharing his opinion that the present League is 'neither Islamic nor patriotic.' As Mr. Huq says, 'It serves neither the Muslims nor anybody else.' In fact its recent policies have done great harm to the interests of the Muslims. If Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, who has never seriously believed in the policies of the League, were to join hands with the Bengal Premier the League would be completely deprived of the importance which to-day it has come to enjoy owing to the patronage of Mr. Amery and other die-hards. If undue importance has been given to the League that is not because the die-hards have any regard for the Muslims but because the upper class leadership has made the League a tool in the hands of imperialism. The League co-operated with the Simon Commission and adopted a pro-imperialist attitude at the Round Table Conference in 1931.

Only a few years ago the League did not count for much. In the United Provinces, for instance, the League actually was on the verge of collapse. 'Since the beginning of 1938,' says K.B. Krishna in the *Problem of Minorities*, 'in the district of Allahabad a struggle has been going on between the Kisans and the zamindars. Some of the zamindars are Muslims and strong supporters of the League. So they tried to appeal to a section of the Kisans, the Muslim tenants, on the religious plank. This was an eye-opener to the Muslim Kisans. They found that religion was being used as a mask by their exploiting co-religionists.' The interests of the Muslims and the Hindus are identical. Both have to gain by the prosperity of the country and both have to suffer if misfortune overtakes the country. Nothing can alter this fact. Whatever rights the people of India have under the British Government, the Mohamedans and the Hindus enjoy equally says Mr. Mitra in *Anglo-Indian Studies*. In the same way the limitations of the people of India are shared equally by Hindus and Mohamedans. Yet because the thoughtful elements have not asserted their authority the Muslim Leaguers have been able to poison the minds of the masses. The Hindus and the Muslims are one nation. The fact that they follow different religions cannot make them different nations. Quite a number of Egyptians are Christians. Do they for that reason cease to be Egyptians?

Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League has indeed, proved a serious menace to the cause of progress. It is, as Mr. Huq says, 'leading even the Muslims to political ruin and disaster.' Under these circumstances Mr. Fazlul Huq's move to form a Progressive Muslim League will be welcomed by all right-thinking persons. Had this move been taken earlier, perhaps the League would have been prevented from doing the harm that it has done to the cause of freedom of India, which means freedom of both Hindus and Muslims. The task that Mr. Fazlul Huq has undertaken is not easy of achievement, for men's minds to-day are swayed by passions and false cries. But if Mr. Huq remains steadfast in his purpose, there is no doubt that he will ultimately receive the support of many Muslim leaders. We hope Mr. Huq's new Muslim League will prove a tower of strength to the cause of India's progress.



82. Jawaharlal Nehru to Allama Mashriqi, 23 June 1942, about M.A. Jinnah's Desire for Withdrawal of the Allahabad Resolution before Any Negotiations
SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 516.

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,

I have received your telegram in which you say that Mr. Jinnah desires the withdrawal of the Allahabad resolution before he can negotiate. Presumably this refers to the recent resolution of the All India Congress Committee relating to the unity of India. That resolution merely confirmed the position for which the Congress has stood for 57 years now. Anyway nobody can withdraw it except the All India Congress Committee. Personally I would be against any change in that resolution as I think the congress position relating to the unity of India is sound. Mr. Jinnah's suggestion that this resolution should be withdrawn is on a par with a suggestion I might make that the Muslim League resolution about Pakistan should be withdrawn. Such suggestions do not help either way. If people are prepared to talk over matters, they do not put forward conditions which in themselves are tantamount to decisions. The suggestion I made in Bombay and elsewhere was that people holding different views on this subject should, while adhering to their views, agree to cooperate on the basis of achieving the independence of India and the transfer of full political power to the representatives of the Indian people. Further they can cooperate then in the defence of a free India. After that they can consider the other questions that divide them and come to an understanding. This course of action does not commit anyone or compel him to give up his own particular point of view.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

83. M.A. Jinnah on the 'Quit India' Formula: 'Mr. Gandhi's Mask Off'
The Times of India, 23 June 1942.

The motive behind Mr. Gandhi's recent 'Quit India' formula is to establish the Congress Hindu Raj, says Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in a statement to the Press. He also refers to a reported 'big move' by the Congress and adds that 'nothing is going to move us from the set purpose of achieving our goal of Pakistan.'

'I am glad,' Mr. Jinnah states, 'that at last Mr. Gandhi has openly declared that unity and a Hindu-Muslim settlement can only come after the achievement of India's independence and has thereby thrown off the cloak that he has worn for the last 22 years. So one of his four pillars that there can be no Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity has been abandoned by him at last. He has worn the mask well all these years and tried in a consummate manner to fool the Muslims, and I agree with him that "time is a merciless enemy" and at last he stands now in his true colours.'

'I had held that Mr. Gandhi never wanted to settle the Hindu-Muslim question except on his own terms of Hindu domination, and it is he and he alone who, at every critical moment, whenever there was a chance of agreement, had by some means or other dashed our hopes from 1925 onwards.'

New Formula

‘So now we are presented with a new formula, and that formula is “Quit India.” But after having said that Britain should withdraw, he added, as he always keeps a loophole, “in an orderly manner;” and since his first pronouncement he has been engaged in giving explanations after explanations, the last of which we have not yet heard both in this country and Abroad. It is quite clear to those who understand Mr. Gandhi’s language that he wants the British Government to accept that the Congress means India and Gandhi means the Congress, and come to terms with him as the spokesman of all India with regard to the transfer of the power of Government to the self-styled and self-titled Indian National Congress and keep him in power and authority by means of the British bayonet so that the Hindu Congress Raj can dominate over Muslims and other minorities and force them into submission. He does not mean to achieve India’s independence. He and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru are both indulging in slogans and catchwords. If they can persuade the British government to withdraw immediately even without Mr. Gandhi’s qualifications of “orderly withdrawal”, the Muslim League would welcome it.

‘It is a libel to say that the Muslim League is in favour of the continuation of the British Raj in this country. Pandit Nehru has made it quite clear that he is not even prepared to discuss the issue of Pakistan, nor is he prepared to discuss the communal question in any shape or form “until India’s independence is achieved and foreign authority is eliminated.” But he (Pandit Nehru) says, “So far as I am concerned, and I believe that so far as Congressmen are concerned, we would willingly meet Mr. Jinnah if that serves the cause we have at heart.” But he is not prepared to consider the cause we have at heart and he says: “But it would be very much to the point if we discussed the means of achieving independence for India or, to put it differently, the means of eliminating foreign authority from India’s first and then other questions will be considered.”’

Abstract Talk

‘First’, Mr. Jinnah continues, ‘would he disclose the means or his plan or scheme by which the foreign authority can be eliminated from India? It is no use talking in abstract words that we want to achieve India’s independence. It is no use building imaginary castles in the air and using catchwords like freedom for India, independence and national government. The independence and freedom of all the peoples of this sub-continent is to be thought of not only in the negative terms of elimination of foreign authority or rule resulting in anarchy or chaos as Mr. Gandhi promises us, but in a definite and positive form of the constitution and setting up of a Government to which the power and authority of the British can be transferred, and which could take the place of the foreign authority which Mr. Gandhi wants to end today, and that such a Government will command the confidence and allegiance of the different nationalities and interests that exist in this vast sub-continent.

‘So long as this present camouflage and deception and false propaganda is maintained by the Congress, India’s progress will continue to be in jeopardy. I am told that there is going to be a “big move”. This threat and intimidation is intended to coerce a distressed and shaken Britain to accede to Mr. Gandhi’s demand. I can only say that Britain will be making the greatest blunder if she surrenders to the Congress in any manner which would be detrimental to the interests of Muslim India. We do not know what this “big move” is going to be. Nothing is going to move us from the set purpose of achieving our goal of Pakistan. When the time comes the

Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League will decide how to face the new situation if it arises, and I will call a meeting of the Working Committee as soon as occasion arises.'

84. Khaksar–Muslim League Negotiations: Home Department Note, 26 June 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 28/6/42, NAI.

Although the question of the collaboration or amalgamation of the Khaksars with other political organizations such as Congress or the Muslim League is not a new one, it appears to have come to the fore again recently. Both Congress and the Muslim League are at present anxious to strengthen their volunteer organizations and the Khaksars, provide a useful means to that end.

C. Rajagopalachari's recent move to bring about a Congress–League settlement appears to have impressed Inayatullah Mashriqi, who inquired of Jinnah what, in his opinion, should be the minimum conditions of cooperation between the Khaksars and Rajagopalachari. In reply, Jinnah appealed to Khaksars to 'join and support whole heartedly the League policy at this critical juncture.' Inayatullah has declared that he will openly identify himself with Congress and there has recently been some talk of a Khaksar–Congress understanding. Information on record, however, shows that such a gesture may be merely a diplomatic move. Some real affinity appears to exist at present between the Khaksars and the Muslim League and an amalgamation would appear to be in the interest of both these organizations. After the Conference of the All-India Muslim League held at Allahabad in the first week of April last, M.A. Jinnah, Sir Nazim-ud-Din and Hasan Isphahani are reported to have met in New Delhi and to have arrived at tentative decisions in regard to a Khaksar–Muslim League understanding. Sayeed Ahmad of Bengal, who is both a Muslim Leaguer and a Khaksar leader, was sent to Madras with a message from which the following is believed to be an extract:-

'Upon Allama Sahib agreeing to join the All-India Muslim League and declaring to that effect and requesting his followers to join the Muslim League which is the only authoritative and representative political organization of the Musalmans in India, the president of the League will be glad to have the prominent Khaksars associated with the executives of the provincial Leagues and Allama Mashriqi will be welcome to join the working Committee of the All-India Muslim League.

On receipt of this message, Inayatullah arranged a meeting of the available Khaksar leaders in Madras who are reported to have arrived at the following conclusions on 26-4-42:

1. The Khaksar movement should cooperate with Muslim League and in doing so, it would maintain its individuality.
2. It should not take part in the Muslim League subscriptions, dinners etc.
3. The Khaksars should make every effort to bring about a settlement between the Muslim League and its opponents Congress etc.
4. In case the Muslim League was to accept office they should give a seat in the ministry to the nominee of Mashriqi in the Central Government.

As a result of further information, discussions between Muslim League and Khaksar leaders agreement is reported to have been reached on the following points:

1. A meeting of the prominent Khaksars who feel the necessity of Muslim solidarity, which can only be achieved under the Muslim League at the present moment, and the prominent members of the Muslim League should be held as soon as possible.
2. A full account of the negotiations should be published in a booklet form, and should be circulated among the Khaksars who will join the League.
3. National Guards should be reconstructed on a much healthier basis than has hitherto been the case.
4. A complete programme for the social reconstruction of the Muslims of India should be prepared.

It was suggested towards the end of May that the proposed conference of leaders of the Khaksars and Muslim League should take place at Delhi. Since then, however, nothing more has been heard in the matter.

85. M.A. Jinnah on Just Course before Britian

The Bombay Chronicle, 3 July 1942.

Bombay, July 2

Mr. M.A. Jinnah in a press interview declined to comment on his recent conversation with Mr. Rajagopalachari, as it was premature to do so.

The only way for Britian, he said, to do justice is to hand over the Muslim homelands to the Musalmans and the Hindu homelands to Hindus. It is practical proposition and will cause the least amount of trouble and friction.

Sooner the British give their decision in this regard the better it is for all the parties. The Pakistan scheme of partition of India is just and reasonable both to the Hindus and Musalmans of India.

Mr. Jinnah characterized the proposal of Hindu Congress for the united and democratic Government for the whole of India as one which could and would mean, for all intents and purposes Hindu Raj and Hindu domination over one hundred millions of Musalmans.

If such a constitution is forced upon India by the British, or if they are influenced in that direction by America, there will ensue immediately a first class disaster in this country.

Muslim India will never submit to a unitary or united self-government for all India taken as one single unit, as that will immediately bring the north-western and eastern zones (the Muslim homelands, where Musalmans are in a majority) entirely under the yoke of Hindus.

.... 'The difference between the Hindus and Muslims is deep-rooted and ineradicable. We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions. In short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of International Law we are a nation.'



86. V.D. Savarkar Demands Equal Partnership in Commonwealth

The Bombay Chronicle, 7 July 1942.

Bombay, July 5

Mr. V.D. Savarkar, President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, has issued a statement on the expansion of the Viceregal Executive Council in the course of which he says:

‘The Government must bear in mind that ... detailed steps as the expansion of the Council, nomination of Indians to the War Cabinet or any other patchwork, can never help the Government in the main objection of persuading the Indian people for whole-hearted efforts, which are indispensable now, for the British to win the war. An unambiguous declaration by the British Government should be made granting complete political freedom and equal co-partnership to Hindus in an Indo-British Commonwealth with a right to secede.’

87. Jawaharlal Nehru to Allama Mashriqi, 8 July 1942, about Congress and the Idea of Unity

SWJN, Vol. 12, p. 517.

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,

I have your telegram. I think I have already made our position clear to you. The Congress ever since its inception has been based on the national unity of India. Without that idea of unity, the Congress fails of its purpose and might as well be wound up. The resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee in Allahabad in effect stated that the Congress should not agree to the break-up of that unity. This resolution may or may not have been necessary, but in effect it merely confirmed the old Congress position. To annul that resolution is to state to the world that the Congress is prepared to consider the division of India into two parts. That would be against the fundamental Congress position.

Apart from this, however, the Congress has stated that while it stands by the unity of India and considers any division fatal for all concerned, still it cannot think in terms of compelling any territorial unity to remain in an Indian Union against its declared emphatic will.

I have already told you that constitutionally speaking it is beyond our power to upset a resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. Only the A.I.C. C. or the full Congress can do that.

I think the position is quite clear. What I suggested to you previously was that the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as others, need not give up their particular positions or objectives but may still cooperate together for the independence and defence of India. What they must all decide is that they will not look up to the British Government for help in furthering their particular claims, as this is derogatory to the dignity of any Indian or any group in India. It is for us to settle these matters among ourselves without invoking foreign authority.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru



88. The *Paigam* (Bombay), 12 July 1942, on B.S. Moonje's Statements
Home Department (Special) Reg. No. S.D. 3144-A, MSA.

In the course of an article headed 'Wicked intentions of the Hindu Sabha' the *Paigam* writes: Dr. Moonje says 'if the Muslims still persist in their claim that they are a separate nation and that they belong to a foreign country that we should behave with them in that light. If they are trying to establish their control over certain parts of India then we must resist it. Just as Britain—Russia and China are making a united effort to drive out the foreigners from their countries, similarly steps should be taken to drive away the foreigners from their countries, similarly steps should be taken to drive away the foreigners (the Indian Muslims) from India.' The aim of the congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Liberal Federation, as well as every Hindu institution is the same as that declared by Dr. Moonje in clear terms though these bodies couch it in different words. The Muslims should not be misled thereby and get entrapped but they should make preparations for self-defence against this move of the Hindus. Dr. Moonje says that 'there is sufficient British army to meet the foreign aggression'. Dr. Moonje has fears about the Muslims only and he therefore, wants the Muslims to be driven out of India, or bring about their ruin. The Hindu Mahasabha has been making various sorts of preparations for this purpose. It has placed a proposal before the British Government to raise an army of the Hindus for guerilla warfare. The object behind this proposal is not to offer resistance to foreign aggression but there is the hidden object of opposing the Muslims. All the District, Taluka and city Muslim Leagues should make preparations for self defence in order that they may become strong enough to oppose the internal enemies.

89. M.K. Gandhi to Muslim Correspondents

Harijan, 12 July 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, pp. 276–7.

'How can you think of a mass movement for liberation without first closing with Muslims?', ask Muslim correspondents whose letters fill my file. I used at one time to think like my correspondents. But I see that for the moment I cannot reach the Muslim mind. The Muslim League blocks my way. I try to read the League newspapers. They give me a peep into the League mind in so far as they represent it. In their opinion I am thoroughly untrustworthy. Even my services during the Khilafat days wear for them a sinister meaning. I am quite clear in my mind that this is a passing phase. I am not aware of having done a single disservice to any Muslim cause or a Muslim person. Thank God, even today I claim numerous Muslim friends....

90. M.A. Jinnah's Reply to B.S. Gandhi's Article 'To Muslim Correspondents'

Speeches, Statements and Messages of the Quaid-e-Azam, Vol. 3, 19 July 1942, pp. 1583–7.

.... Even the remote and veiled recognition of Pakistan in the draft declaration of His Majesty's Government brought to India by Sir Stafford Cripps was characterized by Mr. Gandhi as 'wicked', and he for one had nothing whatever to do with it. He became more emphatic in the *Harijan* when Mr. Rajagopalacharya was inclined to rely upon his previous articles saying that the Madras leader had misunderstood him and unequivocally declared that Pakistan in his

opinion was not only a crime but much worse and amounted to a sin, thus damning anyone who ventured to think in terms of Pakistan not only in this world but also in the next.

The All-India congress Committee at Allahabad not only rejected the proposal of Mr. Rajagopalacharya favouring Pakistan, but on the contrary passed a resolution moved by Mr. Jagatnarin Lal, completely turning down any idea of Pakistan and declared itself definitely and emphatically for 'Akhand Hindustan.' What difference remains between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress? The Hindu Mahasabha has been openly saying for a considerable time now—"achievement of India's freedom and independence first and communal settlement afterwards," on the basis that Mussalmans are a minority among other minorities in India and on the fundamental principle of the establishment of 'Akhand Hindustan' and Hindudom. Mr. Gandhi is also revolving on the same pivot. Recently Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made it quite clear that he was not prepared even to discuss the Pakistan scheme and called it a 'mockery.'

Mr. Rajagopalacharya's Sin

'Mr. Rajagopalacharya has committed not only a crime but a sin in favouring the idea of partition, for as a result of his trying to persuade Mr. Gandhi and the Congressmen, in a friendly way, he has been virtually expelled from the organization. Is Mr. Gandhi really sincere in the light of the above fact that he is open to conviction, or is it merely one of his new techniques to mislead people?

'In the issue of the *Harijan*, dated July 12, I see that side by side with this article, another one has also appeared in which, while dealing with the Andhra separation, Mr. Gandhi says: "the Andhras do not claim to be a separate nation having nothing in common with the rest of India. Pakistan on the other hand is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign State," and yet in the article under discussion he says: "Only the protagonists know what they want and mean. I plead for such an exposition. Nobody has told me all its implications." Surely Mr. Gandhi does not need a better exposition than his own. He has himself put the Muslim demand in a nutshell.

'From the lines of his writings and the way in which his mind is working it seems that no mere mortal can ever succeed in convincing Mr. Gandhi of the rightness of the Muslim demand, except perhaps the "inner voice" of his Providence!

'The picture that he draws of the result of his movement, his one aim and object being to displace British power from India, means, on his own showing, that there will ensue a rule of the jungle. But he knows that he does not mean that. It is merely a ruse to coerce and embarrass the British Government to surrender to the establishment of the Hindu raj in this sub-continent.

'I cannot imagine how any Indian can visualize with equanimity the lurid picture which he depicts. And here it is in his own words: "Thus assuming that the British leave, there is no government and no constitution, British or other. Heretofore there is no Central Government. Militarily, the most powerful party may set up its rule and impose it on India if the people submit. Muslims may declare Pakistan and nobody may resist them. Hindus may do likewise."

'I suppose he means to set up Hindudom. He proceeds: "Sikhs may set up their rule in territories inhabited by them. There is no end to the possibilities." Surely this is a manifestation of an angered and a desperate mentality. Is this the best contribution that Mr. Gandhi can make to India in the evening of his life?

Independent India

'Then comes the end of the article when naively he says: "Why should not the Muslims who believe in 'Independent India' join such a struggle? If, on the other hand, they believe in Pakistan through the British aegis, it is a different story. I have no place for it." Mr. Gandhi's conception of "Independent India" is basically different from ours. What we want is the independence of Hindus and Muslims and others. Mr. Gandhi by Independence means Congress raj. We do not believe in Pakistan through the British aid or under the British aegis. Pakistan is an article of faith with Muslim India, and we depend upon nobody except ourselves for the achievement of our goal and Muslim India is ready and willing to face opposition and obstacles from whatever quarter they may come.

'I ask Mr. Gandhi to give up the game of fooling the Mussalmans by insinuating that we depend upon the British for the achievement of our goal of Pakistan. I ask him to drop what he calls "the few Muslim friends", that are still left. Hands off the Muslims and as one of the foremost leaders of Hindu India and as a realist I ask him to show his sincerity and frankness for an honourable settlement. Mr. Gandhi will have then rendered a great service not only to the two great communities—his own and mine—but also to the millions of other minorities and interests in this country that are involved.

91. M.K. Gandhi on the Implications of Pakistan

The Times of India, 13 July 1942

Ahmedabad, July 12

"How can you think of a mass movement for liberation without first closing with Muslims?" ask Muslim correspondents whose letters fill my file,' says Mr. Gandhi in the *Harijan*. 'I used at one time to think like my correspondents,' he continues, 'but I see that for the moment I cannot reach the Muslim mind. The Muslim League blocks my way, I try to read the League newspapers. They give me a peep into the League mind in so far as they represent it. In their opinion I am thoroughly untrustworthy. Even my services during the Khilafat days wear for them a sinister meaning. I am quite clear in my mind that this is a passing phase. I am not aware of having done a single disservice to any Muslim cause or Muslim person. Thank God, even today I claim numerous Muslim friends.

'I do not know how to get rid of the distrust. "Give Pakistan", say my critics. I answer, "It is not in my giving. If I felt convinced of the rightness of the demand, I should certainly work for it side by side with the League. But I do not. I would like to be convinced. Nobody has yet told me all its implications. Those that are described in the anti-Pakistan Press are too terrible to contemplate. But I cannot take them from the opposition. Only the protagonists know what they want and mean. I plead for such an exposition. Surely Pakistanis want to convert the opposition not to force them. Has an attempt been ever made to meet the opposition in a friendly manner and to convert them? I am sure the Congress is willing to be converted, let alone me."

Only Settlement

'What will happen after, if ever we reach that stage, will depend upon how we act when the all-powerful British hand is withdrawn. We may quarrel among ourselves or we may adjust

our quarrels and agree to set up ordered rule on behalf of the people. It may be a democratic constitution or unadulterated autocracy or oligarchy. The conception is not that of a settlement with the British Government. That could happen only if there is a settlement between the principal parties, and as a preliminary the Congress the league. But that so far as I can see is not to be.

‘Therefore, the only settlement with the British Government can be that their rule should end, leaving India to her fate. Thus, assuming that the British leave, there is no Government and no constitution, British or other. Therefore there is no Central Government. Militarily the most powerful party may set up its rule and impose it on India, if the people submit. Muslims may declare Pakistan and nobody may resist them. Hindus may do likewise; Sikhs may set up their rule in territories inhabited by them. There is no end to the possibilities. And to all this idle speculation let me suggest one more addition. The Congress and League being the best organized parties in the country may come to terms and set up a provisional Government acceptable to all. And this may be followed by a duly elected constituent assembly.

‘The movement has only one aim—that is of displacing the British power. If that happy event comes about and if it is followed by a stable Government, it will most assuredly decide the fate of the war—I shall hope in a non-violent manner. India can show no other strength—during this war, at any rate. Why should not Muslims, who believe in Pakistan but also believe in an independent India, join such a struggle? If, on the other hand, they believe in Pakistan through British aid and under British aegis, it is a different story. I have no place in it.’

92. ‘Give Up Fooling the Muslims’: M.A. Jinnah’s Retort to M.K. Gandhi

The Times of India, 15 July 1942

‘I ask Mr. Gandhi to give up the game of fooling the Muslims by insinuating that we depend upon the British for the achievement of our goal of Pakistan,’ says Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim league, referring to a recent article by Mr. Gandhi in *Harijan* on Pakistan.

.... ‘Even the remote and veiled recognition of Pakistan in the draft declaration of His Majesty’s Government brought to India by Sir Stafford Cripps, was characterized by Mr. Gandhi as “wicked”—and he for one had nothing whatever to do with it. He became more emphatic in *Harijan* when Mr. Rajagopalachari was inclined to rely upon his previous articles, saying that the Madras leader had misunderstood him and unequivocally declared that Pakistan, in his opinion, was not only a crime but much worse and amounted to a sin, thus damning anyone who ventured to think in terms of Pakistan not only in this world but also in the next.

‘The All-India Congress Committee at Allahabad not only rejected the proposal of Mr. Rajagopalachari favouring Pakistan, but, on the contrary, passed a resolution moved by Mr. Jagatnarain Lal, completely turning down any idea of Pakistan and declared itself definitely and emphatically for Akhand Hindustan. The Hindu Mahasabha has been openly saying for a considerable time now—“Achievement of India’s freedom and independence first and communal settlement afterwards, on the basis that Muslims are a minority amongst other minorities in India and on the fundamental principle of the establishment of Akhand Hindustan and Hindudom”, Mr. Gandhi is also revolving on the same pivot.

‘Recently, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made it quite clear that he was not prepared even to discuss the Pakistan scheme and called it a mockery.

‘Mr. Rajagopalachari has committed not only a crime but a sin in favouring the idea of partition, for as a result of his trying to persuade Mr. Gandhi and Congressmen, in a friendly way, he has been virtually expelled from the organization. Is Mr. Gandhi really sincere in the light of the above facts that he is open to conviction, or is it merely one of his new techniques to mislead people?’

Muslims’s Demand in Nutshell

‘In the issue of *Harijan* dated July 12, I see that side by side with this article, another one has also appeared in which, while dealing with the Andhra separation, Mr. Gandhi says, “The Andhras do not claim to be a separate nation, having nothing in common with the rest of India. Pakistan, on the other hand, is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign state”; and yet in the article under discussion he says, “Only the protagonists know what they want and mean. I plead for such an exposition. Nobody has told me all its implications.” Surely Mr. Gandhi does not need a better exposition than his own. He has himself put the Muslim demand in a nutshell.

‘From the lines of his writings and the way in which his mind is working, it seems that no mere mortal can ever succeed in convincing Mr. Gandhi of the rightness of the Muslim demand except perhaps the inner voice of Providence....’

93. Nasik Muslim League Speakers: Congress Outplayed by Quaid-e-Azam

The Times of India, 17 July 1942.

Nasik, July 12

‘Today as never before, the Congress and its Bania leader, Mr. Gandhi, both stand self-condemned by their own acts, and have been thoroughly outplayed in their selfish game by that great Muslim leader Quaid-e-Azam. The timely warning given by that leader that Islam was in danger at the hands of the communally-ridden Hindu organisation has been proved to the hilt by the recent action of that oligarchic body, which led to the exit of Mr. Rajagopalachari.’ These and other criticisms were made against the Congress by speakers at a public meeting of Nasik Muslims held here last night to welcome Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim, the chairman, and members of the Muslim League Civil Defence Committee.

Sir Currimbhoy explained the aims and objects of the Civil Defence Committee and asked the Muslims to follow the instructions of the committee. He urged them to join the Muslim National Guards in large numbers.

At a meeting of the Working Committees of the Nasik District and Primary Muslim League and other League workers, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim explained the civil defence programme which the League proposed to undertake with the necessary qualifications to suit local conditions to protect Muslim life and property.

94. ‘Muslim League Needs Funds’: M.A. Jinnah’s Plea

The Times of India, 16 July 1942.

Satisfaction at the response shown by the Muslims of India to his appeal for the Muslim league National Fund was expressed by Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League,

replying to the joint address and a purse of Rs.17,500 presented to him by the Memon Chamber of Commerce and the Memon Merchants' Association, at a reception at Kesar Baug, Dongri, Bombay, on Wednesday. A sum of Rs.1,107 contributed by the Muslims of Malegaon was also presented to Mr. Jinnah at the function.

The address assured Mr. Jinnah that whenever and in whatever form a call for sacrifice for achieving their cherished goal of Pakistan came, the Memon community would never be found wanting.

After expressing his gratefulness for the presentation of the purse Mr. Jinnah said that though during the last five years Muslim India had progressed very far and political consciousness among them had been roused. Yet, there were still people among them who had not yet understood the grimness of the struggle that was being carried.

Appeal to Rich

Mr. Jinnah made an appeal to those who were rich to rise from their slumber. He struck a note of caution to them that they should not think that because they led a comfortable life it mattered little what they did or did not do. They would suffer more. It was their property that was in danger. They should realize that the value of money was changing and they should not look to their bank accounts.

It was only after five years that they had appealed to the Muslim public for funds and after having proved what an organized effort could do. Since the appeal was made in March last, Mr. Jinnah pointed out that Rs.3,00,000 had been collected from all over India. When the amount of Rs.10,00,000 appealed for had been collected, Mr. Jinnah said they would enter into the next phase of their activity.

95. Complete Faith in AICC: Tamil Nad Nationalist Muslims Pass Resolution

The Tribune, 22 July 1942.

Madras, July 21

A resolution requesting the A.I.C.C. to chalk out immediately a plan for effecting Hindu-Muslim unity, having regard to the present national conditions was passed unanimously at the Tamil Nad Nationalist Muslims Conference held at Karur under the presidency of Mr. K.M. Sheriff, member of the A.I.C.C. The conference affirmed its complete faith in the A.I.C.C. and expressed its willingness to follow its lead.

In the course of his presidential address Mr. Sheriff said: Pakistan would result in frequent troubles between the Hindus and Muslims. It was not their aim to set up either Hindu rule or Muslim or any alien rule. Their one ideal was a united and free India. They envisaged a world Federation in which each country would be self-governing and free.



96. M.A. Jinnah to Summon League Executive

The Bombay Chronicle, 24 July 1942.

Bhopal, July 23

‘The recent resolution of the Congress Working Committee and the pronouncements of Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders have created a most dangerous and most serious situation in the country and it seems to me that the All-India Muslim League must consider as soon as possible the developments that have taken place. I, therefore, propose to call a meeting of the Working Committee at an early date’, stated Mr. M.A. Jinnah in an interview.

Mr. Jinnah added: ‘In the meantime I ask the Mussalmans of India to be vigilant and not commit themselves in any way or fall into the net that is being spread by the Congress or involve themselves in any proposed “big move”, which they intend to launch for what they call “freedom and independence of India”, but await the decision of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League.’

97. M.K. Gandhi’s Article: ‘For Muslim Friends’

Harijan, 26 July 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, pp. 315–16.

I have read with attention Quaid-e-Azam’s reply to my article in *Harijan*. ‘Pakistan,’ according to him, ‘in a nutshell,’ is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign State.’ This sovereign State can conceivably go to war against the one of which it was but yesterday a part. It can also equally conceivably make treaties with other States. All this can certainly be had, but surely not by the willing consent of the rest.

But it seems he does not want it by consent. For he says:

Pakistan is an article of faith with Muslim India and we depend upon nobody except ourselves for the achievement of our goal.

How is one to offer one’s services in these circumstances?

But later he gives me hope, for he says: ‘Show your sincerity and frankness for an honourable settlement.’ In order to show both, I wrote the article to which the Quaid-e-Azam has objected. How else is one to show sincerity and frankness except through one’s action and speech or pen?

Let me state my limitations. I cannot speak as a mere Hindu, for my Hinduism includes all religions. I can speak only as an Indian. If Pakistan as defined above is an article of faith with him, indivisible India is equally an article of faith with me. Hence there is a stalemate.

But today there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. It is Englistan. So I say to all India, let us first convert it into the original Hindustan and then adjust all rival claims. This is surely clear. After the restoration of India to the nation, there will be no Central Government. The representatives will have to construct it. It may be one Hindustan or many Pakistans.

If the Quaid-e-Azam really wants a settlement, I am more than willing and so is the Congress. He will forgive me for suggesting that his reply leaves on one the impression that he does not want a settlement. If he wants one, why not accept the Congress President’s offer that Congress and League representatives should put their heads together and never part until they have reached a settlement. Is there any flaw or want of sincerity in this offer?



98. M.K. Gandhi on the Need to Know Urdu, 27 July 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 337–8.

The Hindustani Prachar Sabha has begun its work in right earnest. It is purely a body of workers who believe in the message and mission of the Sabha. The message is that the national language of India is not English but Hindustani, i.e., Hindi plus Urdu. Shri Purushottamdas Tandon, who is the soul of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, was the author of the Congress resolution on Hindustani. It was he who made it crystal clear to me that Hindustani at present must mean Hindi plus Urdu. Everyone who attends Congress meetings realizes this truth, for when a Congressman speaks in Hindi the Urdu-speaking men do not fully understand him, if at all, and the same thing applies to Urdu speakers. Therefore if you wish to be understood by all, you have to speak a combination of the two as I have heard Malaviyaji and Babu Bhagwandas doing. Hence the necessity of Indian nationalists speaking both the varieties of Hindustani speech. No one may be said to speak Hindustani who is not equally at home with both the varieties. Hence the necessity also of their knowing equally well both the scripts. To supply this felt want is one of the main causes of founding the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. Its founders were and are members of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. But their ambition was not satisfied with mere Hindi propaganda.

Therefore, with the approval of the Sammelan, they have founded the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. Naturally the Sabha's first act should be to induce all the Hindi-knowing persons to learn Urdu and to provide facilities for them. To this end I am in communication with Maulana Abdul Haq Saheb, the learned secretary of the Anjuman Taraqui-e-Urdu for help and guidance. The council of the Sabha has decided to hold the first examination in Urdu on the 22nd November.

The particulars, including the syllabus, will be published as soon as possible. Those who would appear for this examination are requested to send in their names to Acharya Shriman Narayan Agarwal, Hindustani Prachar Office, Wardha. I hope that all those who have passed the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan examinations will be eager to pass the forthcoming Urdu examination. Of course those who do not know Hindi would also be welcome. A knowledge of any language at any time enriches one's mind and enables one to cultivate closer contact with the people who speak that language. How much more valuable must a knowledge of Urdu be to the one who knows Hindi only, as that of Hindi must be to the one who knows Urdu only? If living Hindustani is to come into being it can only be through a natural and happy fusion of the two. Such a fusion is impossible without a large number of persons having an equal command over both the sister languages.

SEVAGRAM, July 27, 1942

Harijan, 2-8-194299. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Syed Mahmud, 28 July 1942, about Mahmud's Book¹*CWMG*, Vol. 76, pp. 342–3.

Bhai Mahmood,

I read the book from the first page to the last. It reflects your mind. It is good but in my opinion it is not worth publishing. All your information does not seem correct. It should be such that

there is not any scope for two opinions. In the last three chapters there are many things which are not desirable. Your information should be such as both Hindus and Muslims can accept. Let their conclusions be different.

Your duty is to bring the two together. I do not wish that your book should start a controversy. My last advice is: do what Maulana Saheb says.
I hope you have started learning Hindi.

Blessings from
Bapu

¹ See earlier correspondence between Jawaharlal Nehru and Syed Mahmud on this matter in January and February 1942.

100. Punjab Hindu Sabha's Resolution: No Support for Congress Programme

The Tribune, 29 July 1942.

Lahore, July 28

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha was held to-day in the Hindu Sabha Bhawan at 4 p.m. under the presidentship of Bhai Parma Nand. After a long discussion the following resolution was passed:

'The Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha notes with deep concern the turn the political events are taking in India since the resolution of the Congress Working Committee. It seems necessary to state that although the Mahasabha stands for the ideal of complete independence for India it has never had and does not even now support its policy and programme and, therefore it is wrong for anybody—Sir Stafford Cripps, Sir Feroze Khan Noon or any other person of reputation and position to confuse the Congress with the Hindu community and proclaim that the Congress being a Hindu body wants to establish Hindu rule in the country. Hindus as a political entity do not subscribe to the creed of non-violence as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and in the opinion of the Sabha, Gandhiji does not represent the feelings and sentiments of the Hindu community. This Sabha, therefore requests the Mahasabha Executive to call a meeting of the Working Committee to consider the political situation that has arisen and give the proper lead to the Hindu community at this critical juncture.'

101. 'Congress Plan May Lead to Slavery': Bhai Parmanand's View

The Times of India, 6 August 1942.

New Delhi, August 4

'The resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress, even if implemented, would bring about anarchy and disorder at a time when all our energy should be directed to preserving peace,' says Bhai Parmanand, vice-President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha and Member of the Central Assembly in a statement.

'We are on the eve of an invasion from a foe whose capacity for tyranny is well known to us. The Congress conception of independence is negative. The slogan of Mr. Gandhi confirms

my statement. He asks the British to evacuate India. It is the negative type of independence. It means nothing more than that the British should not rule India. Mr. Gandhi says: "There will be anarchy after the British evacuate, and I prefer anarchy to foreign rule." But Mr. Gandhi should note once and for all that anarchy gives rise to further slavery.

'We should decide what type of Government we want as a substitute for the British Government in order that people might have a clear notion as to what we actually desire our country to be.

'There are two ideals before us. One is independence and the other is the integrity of the country. Independence is of no significance if the country is to be divided into a number of separate and independent territories. There are two ways of attaining independence. In the first place, we should have enough physical power to drive the British out of India. Secondly, the British may willingly part with power. I do not know of many instances of the willing transfer of power, but in the case of Britain, we can say that the colonies gained their independence as a matter of gift from the British Parliament. I do firmly believe that we shall have to combine these two methods before we can succeed in our mission of liberating India from foreign rule.

'The Congress took the right step in accepting office in 1937, but if they had accepted the Federal part of the constitution, India should have been saved from the curse of Pakistan and most of our problems could have been solved.

Mr. Gandhi's Methods

'Mr. Gandhi has suggested two methods of attaining independence non-cooperation and satyagraha (civil disobedience). Non-co-operation has put pressure upon Government, but naturally, Government cannot part with power in favour of the section running the civil disobedience campaign. Mr. Gandhi has his popularity and, taking advantage of it, he can spread the notion that India can win independence with civil disobedience. The idea is mere humbug.

'For thousands of years even, civil disobedience cannot grant us freedom. The turning out of the British is not independence. It may perhaps mean another chain of slavery and anarchy and so on. Let us have the power to preserve order in India and that power will win us swaraj.'

102. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to a Muslim, 8 August 1942¹

CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 382.

With reference to your letter giving me the purport of your conversation today with the Quaid-e-Azam, I wish to say in as clear language as possible that when in a *Harijan* article I reproduced Maulana Azad's published offer to the Muslim League I meant it to be a serious offer in every sense of the term. Let me explain it again for your edification. Provided the Muslim League co-operated fully with the Congress demand for immediate independence without the slightest reservation, subject, of course, to the proviso that independent India will permit the operations of the Allied armies in order to check Axis aggression and thus to help both China and Russia, the Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it today exercises to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India, including the so-called Indian India. And the Congress will not only not obstruct any Government that the Muslim League may form on behalf of the people, but will even join the Government in running the machinery of the free State. This is meant in all seriousness and sincerity. Naturally I cannot

give all the implications of the offer and its far-reaching consequences in a hurried reply to your note. You are at liberty to show this to Quaid-e-Azam and to any person who is interested in the question of immediate independence for India and of a free India.

The Hindu, 20-8-1942

¹ The source has quoted the letter from *The Times of India* with the following explanation from 'Candidus': 'The writer reproduces below the transcript of notes dictated to him by the late Mr. Mahadev Desai, being extracts from correspondence between a Muslim citizen of Bombay and Mr. Gandhi a few hours before the arrest.'

103. Muslims Ready to Rule India: M.A. Jinnah's Reply to Congress 'Bluff'

The Times of India, 8 August 1942.

'... the Congress leaders have now started flying kites individually for the purpose of foreign propaganda and to deceive particularly the Musalmans of India. The first one that found an echo in the House of Commons yesterday is that the Congress is fighting purely from an altruistic point of view and does not wish to have any share in the authority and power of the Government and that the Government of India may be handed over to the Muslim League and that they will willingly accept Muslim raj rather than British raj. What is most amazing is the fact that Mr. Gandhi has endorsed such individual utterances of some of the leaders of the Congress.

'In the first place no intelligent man can believe the sincerity of such a desire for it is too good to believe. But supposing they are sincere, I will welcome it....

'Another kite that they have been flying for the last few days is that the Congress is willing to come to a settlement with the League. Here again the proposal is disingenuous because they have laid down the basis of a settlement to be a unitary Federal Government, knowing full well that the Muslim League is opposed to such a basis.

Congress Adamant

'It is evident that the Congress has definitely turned down any discussion of the Muslim proposal of the partition of India or the Pakistan scheme by their official resolution passed on May 1, 1942, by the A.I.C.C. they have also individually, including Mr. Gandhi, adopted an adamant attitude towards the question of Pakistan, which is the basis of a settlement for Muslim India. And Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru recently made it clear that he would not even discuss the partition scheme and that it was a mockery.

'I have noticed in the Congress Press the pre-arranged correspondence which passed between a busy-body of a Muslim, who landed in Bombay the other day from Hyderabad into Birla House on the one hand, and the Congress President on the other, whom I pity, because he represents neither the Hindus nor the Musalmans and has really no voice in the counsels of the Congress, because the letter of the President to this individual had to be endorsed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

'It leaves no doubt in my mind that they have made most contradictory statements with regard to the basis suggesting that the Congress and the Muslim League committees should meet and interpreting the official resolution of the Congress passed on May 1, in a manner which is most dubious and misleading.

104. M.A. Jinnah Ready to Form Government: 'Congress Offer Too Good to Believe'

The Sunday Tribune, 9 August 1942.

Bombay, Aug. 7

'The Congress offer is too good to believe. But supposing they are sincere, I will accept it. If the British Government accepts the solemn recommendation of Mr. Gandhi and, by an arrangement, hands over the Government of the country to the Muslim League, I am sure that under Muslim rule, the non-Muslims will be treated fairly, justly, nay generously; and further the British will be making full amends to Muslims by restoring the Government of India to Muslims from whom they had taken it. "I am sure the Muslims will welcome such a decision," says Mr. Jinnah in the course of a statement.

105. 'Unseemly If True': M.K. Gandhi on the RSS, 9 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 401-3.

Asaf Ali Saheb, President of the Delhi P.C.C. writes:

The enclosed complaint was first brought up before the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee. The writer has now secured two supporters. I know the writer personally as a truthful and unbiased nationalist and I believe his word. I had heard of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its activities; and I also knew that it was a communal organization. The slogan and the speech complained of have been brought to my notice for the first time. I can think of no means of counteracting the effect of such slogans and speeches on other communities, except inviting your attention to them. Perhaps you will take notice of it in the *Harijan*.

The complainant's letter is in Urdu. Its purport is that the organization referred to in Asaf Ali Saheb's letter consisting of 3,000 members goes through a daily lathi drill which is followed by reciting the slogan, 'Hindustan belongs to Hindus and to nobody else.' This recital is followed by a brief discourse in which speakers say: 'Drive out the English first and then we shall subjugate the Muslims. If they do not listen, we shall kill them.' Taking the evidence at its face value, the slogan is wrong and the central theme of the discourse is worse. I can only hope that the slogan is unauthorized and that the speaker who is reported to have uttered the sentiments ascribed to him was no responsible person. The slogan is wrong and absurd, for Hindustan belongs to all those who are born and bred here and who have no other country to look to. Therefore, it belongs to Parsis, Beni Israels, to Indian Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindus as much as to Hindus. Free India will be no Hindu raj, it will be Indian raj based not on the majority of any religious sect or community but on the representatives of the whole people without distinction of religion. I can conceive a mixed majority putting the Hindus in a minority. They would be elected for their record of service and merits. Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics. It is in the unnatural condition of foreign domination that we have unnatural divisions according to religion. Foreign domination going, we shall laugh at our folly in having clung to false ideals and slogans.

The discourse referred to is surely vulgar. There is no question of 'driving out' the English. They cannot be driven out except by violence superior to theirs. The idea of killing the Muslims if they do not remain in subjection may have been all right in bygone days; it has no meaning

today. There is no force in the cry of driving out the English if the substitute is to be Hindu or any other domination. That will be no swaraj. Self-government necessarily means government by the free and intelligent will of the people. I add the word 'intelligent' because, I hope that India will be predominantly non-violent.

Members of society based on non-violence must all be so educated as to be able to think and act for themselves. If their thought and action be one, it will be because they are directed both to a common goal and common result even as the thought and action of a hundred men pulling a rope in one direction would be one.

I hope that those in charge of the Swayamsevak Sangh will inquire into the complaint and take the necessary steps.

Harijan, 9-8-1942

106. Madras Government Public (General) Department Memorandum No. 39559/42-1, Dated 11 August 1942, to Allama Inayatullah Khan Masriqui, Graemes Road, Cathedral PO Madras (Through the Commissioner of Police, Madras)
GO No. 750—Public 1942, TNSA.

With reference to his intimation to the Government of India that he would divest himself of the control of Khaksars in relation to the disobedience move unless the Government of India settle the questions relating to him immediately, Allama Inayatullah Khan Masriqui is hereby warned that if he makes any such announcement, its publication will be prohibited and that he will be arrested. This warning is issued as directed by the Government of India.

S.V. Ramamurty,
Chief Secretary to Government

Chapter 10. Rajagopalachari

1. 'Proclaim India and Burma Free': C. Rajagopalachari Suggests Grand Strategy in Far East

The National Herald, 3 January 1942.

'To proclaim India and Burma free is real grand strategy in the Far East battle—perhaps also in the whole war' declared Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, former Premier of Madras, in an interview on his arrival in Madras this morning from Bardoli.

.... The lag between public opinion and the response of British imperialism is Japan's most precious war weapon. Everything cannot be jammed out of the radio. The Japanese wireless is very busy about India. The Nippon merchants know India too well.

There is only one way to arm India and Burma for defence. It is to make the people of these countries free. It is no good merely blowing into the unlighted fuel. You cannot blame the wood for not warming the pot if you have not lighted it. To proclaim India and Burma free is the real grand strategy of the Far East battle—perhaps also in the whole war.

2. M.R. Jayakar to V.D. Savarkar about C. Rajagopalachari Meeting M.A. Jinnah, Bombay, 21 January 1942

M.R. Jayakar Papers, File No. 727 of 1942, NAI.

My dear Savarkar,

Today's newspapers report that Rajagopalachari, the Congress leader, is soon meeting Jinnah with the view of arriving at a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question and make it the basis of sharing power at the Centre and in the Provinces. Perhaps you are aware that Rajagopalachari has already publicly spoken that he will be prepared to go to the farthest limit to meet the Muslim demand and he will even accept the 50-50 basis with Mr. Jinnah as Prime Minister. As I personally know Mr. Rajagopalachari's generous sentiments in this matter, I am inclined to regard with apprehension the outcome of their meeting, and I think it is your duty as the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, if you disapprove of the 50-50 basis, to immediately take steps to place your view before the Congress leader and the public generally. I have just returned from Poona, where I had a talk with Kalker and other supporters of the Hindu Mahasabha and I have a feeling that they will not submit to a 50-50 basis and will start an agitation against it which may eventually take a very violent and serious form, not restricted to a non-violent civil disobedience movement. I, therefore, desire that you should be on the alert and take steps to make your views known and also the possibilities of a very violent agitation. If I were you, I would even go and see Mr. Gandhi in this connection or Rajagopalachari in a friendly way, so

that they get a very correct idea of what the attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha will be in the event of the 50–50 basis being accepted. I hope that you will not mind my writing this letter, which is done in the friendliest way. Very often the Hindu case goes by default and I am anxious that it should not be so in the present case. What steps you will take in this matter, it is for you to decide. I have written a very strong letter confidentially to Rajagopalachari in this connection warning him against the acceptance of the 50–50 basis and also of the possibilities of a very violent and acrimonious agitation, but I am not sure, in the absence of a strong official protest from you, whether my letter will have any effect. I have suggested that it should be advisable for Rajagopalachari to meet you at a neutral place, but I am not confident that my suggestion will have any effect. Please therefore take immediate step in the right direction. The matter is extremely urgent and unless prompt and effective steps are taken, it may become too late to rectify the catastrophe. Please treat this letter as confidential.

Yours sincerely

M.R.J.

3. M.R. Jayakar to C. Rajagopalachari, 21 January 1942, Warning Him about M.A. Jinnah

M.R. Jayakar Papers, File No. 727 of 1942, NAI.

My dear Rajagopalachari,

Today's newspapers report that you are soon going to meet Mr. Jinnah with the view of arriving at a settlement of the Hindu Muslim question and further that you are prepared to go very far to meet the Muslim League demand and practically to concede the whole of it. Consequent on this news, I am writing this letter which, I hope you will forgive. You do not know Jinnah, as some of us have known him for the last 30 years and I wish to sound a note of warning in a most friendly way which, I hope will be of some help to you. Mr. Jinnah is a very relentless, vindictive, vain, bitter and astute man, as his public life has proved. In dealing with him you have to be very cautious. By his truculence he has so far overreached every Congress leader including the Mahatma and I am anxious that he should not do so in your case. He is at present not guided by any generous or national instinct and for the last 15–20 years he has been most bitterly anti-Hindu and his one desire is to obtain for the Muslims the maximum advantages. His attitude at the Round Table Conference surprised every one of us including the British Delegation. His own effort was, and a deceitful one too, to accept all the concessions that Dr. Moonje made to him on behalf of the Hindus from time to time and subsequently to take them privately to the Prime Minister of England, Ramsay Macdonald, and say to him in a bargaining spirit: 'This is what the Hindus are prepared to give: how much more will the British Government give the Muslims?' This method of bargaining became in course of time so notorious that ultimately Macdonald telephoned to me asking me to stop this process of bargaining. For it was most deceitful and led nowhere. I am citing this incident as proving the unscrupulous way in which Jinnah will bargain for the Muslim cause. As you are dealing with him, I have to warn you to be very careful.

You have publicly spoken of the 50–50 basis being acceptable to you with Jinnah as Prime Minister. I am not worried about the Prime Ministership, which may go to Jinnah or any one else. But it is my duty to warn you that the 50–50 basis at the Centre or in the provinces or in

the Services or administration will not be acceptable to the Hindus. It is not only the opposition of the Hindu Mahasabha that you will have to reckon with in this case, but I may tell you from my inside knowledge that the Hindu Sabha's sentiments of opposition in this matter are shared by a very large section of neutral Hindus. I have definite information that, if the Congress accepts the 50-50 basis, the Hindu Mahasabha will start a most violent agitation against it, which may lead to very serious consequences. I have just returned from Poona where I had a talk with some of the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and it is my duty to warn you that their opposition will take the form of a very violent agitation not restricted to mere non-violent civil disobedience. As you know, they are not votaries of the Mahatma's non-violent creed and, if an agitation should one start, there is no knowing what form of reprisals it will take. I thought it was my duty to place all these consideration before you. Any just settlement which gives to the Muslims what is reasonable, nobody will resent. But the talk of a 50-50 basis in places where their percentage is 4 or 5 is an absurdity and I hope that, in your anxiety to settle the question and share power with the Muslims, you will not commit the mistake of giving the Muslims more than what is reasonable. Please note that the Muslims appetite under Jinnah's leadership has been insatiable. One concession after another has been made in a generous spirit even by men like Lokmanya Tilak, but it has not appeased them. Their hunger has increased by what it fed on. The 50-50 basis is an assertion of their theory of two nations. If you once accept it, it will become indelible in the Indian constitution and will be a pro tanto justification of an eventual cry of Pakistan. We are struggling against this theory of two nations and you should be careful not to accept it in any form or shape. I do hope that you will forgive my writing this letter, which is done in the friendliest spirit and with a view to see that a just and reasonable settlement is effected. Please treat this as confidential.

I wonder if you would consider it desirable to have a talk with Savarkar, the Hindu Sabha leader, before you see Jinnah. It will be an advantage to do so and, if you are agreeable, a meeting can be arranged at a neutral place.

With affectionate regards

Yours sincerely,

M.R.J.

4. C. Rajagopalachari to M.R. Jayakar, 23 January 1942: 'I Have No Plans to Meet Jinnah'

M.R. Jayakar Papers, File No. 727 of 1942, NAI.

My dear Mr. Jayakar,

I had the ... reply to your letter just delivered to me. It was very kind of you to write to me so frankly.

I do not know wherefrom people have got the ideas that I am 'soon going to meet Mr. Jinnah with the view of arriving at a settlement of the Hindu Muslim problem.' I have no such plans and no one has authorized me to do it. I know also the ... of any such adventure in the present circumstances ...



5. C. Rajagopalachari's Public Speech in Madras: Britain No Longer in a Position to Defend India—Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of January 1942, Madras

GOI Home Political File No. 18/1/1942, NAI.

Sri C. Rajagopalachari addressed a public meeting at Madras on 23-1-1942 which was largely attended. His main argument for the demand of independence was that Britain was no longer in a position to defend this country. He also suggested that it would be impossible for the Government to function in villages and that it was the duty of the Congressmen to organize villages on a basis of self-sufficiency.

6. Jawaharlal Nehru's Letter to C. Rajagopalachari, 26 January 1942, Expressing His Unhappiness with the Tone of the Latter's Speeches
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 91-2.

My dear Rajaji,

I have been reading the reports of your speeches given in the newspapers. Some parts of these have distressed me. You have no doubt every right to express your opinion. But I do think that the emphasis you give to certain aspects and the general approach is not in keeping with the opinion of the great majority in the A.I.C.C. or even the Working Committee. Consequently many people here are rather upset at some of the reports of your speeches. It is unbecoming for me or any other member of the Working Committee to enter into a public argument with you. Yet even avoiding that, it is inevitable that what we say should not fit in with what you say.

I should like to make it clear that I am not challenging your right to say what you have said. But a continuous approach to the British Government, even though this might be subject to the conditions laid down by the Congress, makes people think that behind all our resolutions there is a more definite invitation to the British Government and that something in the nature of a compromise is being worked out.... They do not therefore worry themselves about the organizational or the constructive programme of the Congress; nor do they think much about developing their own strength to face the crisis ahead. A feeling of doubt and uncertainty fills the minds of people making them incapable of effective action.

.... For my part, I think it is much too late for any real compromise to take place, for the very minimum conditions on our part are far beyond what the British Government might do. I think there can be nothing more dangerous than our being saddled with responsibility without complete power. Complete power is inconceivable in the present and partial power will make our position worse.

Your references to the Muslim League more or less on same terms as the Congress also seem to me to be unhappy. This gives a fillip to the dwindling fortunes of the League and irritates large numbers of Congressmen and others....

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru



7. C. Rajagopalachari's Speech at the Town Hall Maidan, Trichinopoly, 31 January 1942: British Government Should Transfer Power to Indian People

The Hindu, 2 February 1942.

... Calling upon the British Government to transfer power to the people of India, Mr. Rajagopalachari stated that even now it was not too late. He suggested that full transfer could be made to a Council of National Leaders at the Centre. Such a move alone could make the Indian people to lend their wholehearted support to the war effort, because a free India would at all costs try to defend herself and illustrated his thesis with the example of China who was resisting Japan stubbornly for the last five years because of her intense patriotic fervour. After explaining the significance of the Bardoli resolution, Mr. Rajagopalachari said that it was wrongly supposed by certain critics that there was a desire for power on the part of the sponsors of the resolution. Unless power was fully transferred to Indian hands, the Congress would not accept power either at the Centre or the Provinces. He appealed to the public to organize themselves for the purpose of allaying panic and safeguarding civilians and property in times of disorder.

8. C. Rajagopalachari's Speech at the Municipal Office, Hindupur, 4 February 1942

The Hindu, 9 February 1942.

Britain Should Declare India Free

.... Mr. Rajagopalachari then referred to the war and said that the British had neglected their duty to India, and now they wanted to continue the neglect like the school boy who, finding himself late for the school, did not attend the class at all. They did not realize that it was never too late for mending a wrong. Even now if Britain declared that India was free, every able-bodied man among the 400 million people in India could take up a rifle. There was no need for aeroplanes and cannon, rifles would quite well do. Only if the Indian people wanted to attack other countries would they require superior weapons.

9. Copy of a Telegram Dated 26 February 1942 from Rajendra Prasad, Calcutta, to C. Rajagopalachari, Madras, about the Latter's Suggestion for Convening of Madras Assembly
GOI Home Political File No. 220/42, NAI.

◦ 'Maulana disapproves suggestion.' ◦

10. Copy of Letter Written by C. Rajagopalachari to M.K. Gandhi on the above Telegram
GOI Home Political File No. 220/42, NAI.

Dearest Bapu,

This is about my idea that the Speaker should ask the Governor to convene a meeting of the Assembly to consider the grave situation about Defence. This reply of Moulana does not

surprise me. There is always an unfortunate nervousness about any action. It is the enemy of all adventure in our politics and results in a 'safe' do-nothing position. Sorry to write so brutally.

11. C. Rajagopalachari to T.B. Saprú, 26 February 1942, Praising Him for His Energetic Work

GOI Home Political File No. 220/42, NAI.

I have no words to express my appreciation of your brave and vigilant work. I see that you have put everybody in England into a fit of hard-thinking. I wish the Indian National demand at this crisis did not present any features of minor differences. Amery deserves the sound drubbing you have given him. But I think that the Arch Mischief Maker is not Amery but the Moghul at Delhi. I may be wrong but what I fear is that the latter person is responsible for the intensive policy of dividing the people of India and maintaining the Muslim League opposition in this hour of trial and tribulation. This is of course my suspicion. I wish that it may be proved that it is wrong. The energy you have shown is worthy of imitation by younger people.

12. M.K. Gandhi to C. Rajagopalachari, 2 March 1942, Asking Him to Submit until He Patiently Converts His Companions

CWMG, Vol. 75, p. 379.

My dear C.R.,

What you say is not brutal. Fear is writ large on our faces. Fear of doing wrong, fear of running into the imaginary enemy's trap, is all a species of fear and dangerous at that. However, you have to submit till you patiently convert your companions. They are the best material we have. And it is from that that we have to weave the national fabric. What about the Quaid-e-Azam?

I am counting the days against 20th.

Love,

Bapu

13. Text of the Madras Resolutions¹

The National Herald, 24 April 1942.

MADRAS NEEDS POPULAR GOVERNMENT

Congress Legislature Party's View

Appeal to A.I.C.C. to Permit Formation of Ministry

Plea to Accept League Demand for Pakistan

Madras, April 23

The Madras Congress Legislature Party at its meeting on Thursday passed a resolution voicing 'the general feeling in this part of the country that there should be at this critical juncture a popular government in this province doing its utmost to secure the requisite conditions for the people to play their part. The party is of opinion further that to facilitate united and effective

action in this regard by such a popular government, the Muslim League should be invited to participate in it.¹

The party requested the A.I.C.C. to permit it to take steps to this end, notwithstanding the general all-India policy followed by the Congress.

¹ For actual text of the Madras Resolutions, see Chapter on the Allahabad AICC Meeting.

14. Report on the Meeting at Which the Resolutions Were Passed

The Bombay Chronicle, 24 April 1942.

.... The Hindi Prachar Sabha Hall where the meeting was held, was packed with members of both the Houses of the Madras Legislature, members of the Central Assembly, Presidents and Secretaries of District and Local Congress Committees in the Presidency.

Prominent members who attended included Mr. Bulusu Sambamurthi, Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly, Mr. T. Prakasam, Dr. T.S.S. Rajan, Dr. P. Subbaroyan, Mr. B. Gopal Reddi, Mr. Munuswami Pillai, Mr. R. Ramanathan, ex-Ministers, Mrs. Radhabai Subbaroyan, Mr. K. Santanam, Mr. Anantasayanam Iyengar and Mr. Avanasalingam Chetty, members of the Central Legislature. Mr. T.T. Krishnamachari and Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan also attended the meeting on invitation.

In all 25 members participated in the discussions which lasted for six hours. The proceedings were not open to the Press.

Only members of the Madras Congress Legislature Party were allowed to vote on the resolutions.

The first resolution regarding the Muslim League demand for separation was passed by 37 votes against 6. Three remained neutral.

The second resolution was passed by 39 against 2. Five remained neutral.

15. Akali Dal's Reaction to Madras Resolutions: 'Violation of Pledge Given to Sikhs'

The Bombay Chronicle, 25 April 1942.

'I hope the A.I.C.C. will throw out this proposal which means a violation of the pledge given by the Congress to the Sikhs' said Master Tara Singh, the Akali Leader, commenting on the resolution passed by the Madras Congress Legislature Party recommending to the A.I.C.C. to acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation.

He added: 'The Congress has given to the Sikhs a pledge that they will be a party to no settlement which does not give full satisfaction to the Sikhs amongst others. The Sikhs are not prepared to yield to Pakistan. It is, therefore, not proper for the Congress to agree to any proposal for the vivisection of India.'—A.P.



16. Telegram from Govindan Nair, Secretary, Kerala Congress, Chalapuram, to Congress Leaders, deploring Madras Resolutions, 30 April 1942

Valmiki Choudhary (ed.), *Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents*, Vol. 5, p. 143.

RAJEN BABU ALLAHABAD

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ALLAHABAD

PRESIDENT CONGRESS ALLAHABAD

T PRAKASAM ALLAHABAD

Dr. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA ALLAHABAD

VAST MAJORITY KERALA CONGRESSMEN DEPLORE MADRAS RESOLUTION
STOP SILENCE OF EX-MINISTERS CREATE GRAVE APPREHENSION IN PUBLIC
MIND STOP REQUEST YOU AND WORKING COMMITTEE GIVE DEFINITE LEAD
TO AICC AGAINST RESOLUTION

GOVINDAN NAIR

SECY KERALA CONGRESS

17. Bombay Leaders Strongly Oppose Madras Resolutions

The Times of India, 27 April 1942.

Members of the Bombay Congress Legislature Party are strongly opposed to the Madras resolutions. A leading Congressman characterized the resolutions as 'ill-conceived, inopportune and harmful to the best interests of the country.'

For want of time it was not possible to convene a meeting of all the members of the Party but such of the members as are in Bombay assembled at the Party Office on Saturday and discussed the situation arising from the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps and the Madras resolutions. Mr. B.G. Kher, ex-Premier of Bombay and Leader of the Party, ascertained the views of the members present. The general sense of the meeting was that the Congress Working Committee had no other alternative but to reject the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps. As regards the Madras resolutions, members were of the opinion that the proposals contained in them were against the best interests of the country and ought not to have been made at all.

18. On the Madras Resolution and Anxiety in Congress Circles

The Hindu, 28 April 1942.

The delay in the arrival of Sardar Patel and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, who were expected last night, has necessitated postponement of commencement of the deliberations of the Congress Working Committee.

It would be idle to contend that Rajaji's attitude towards the two resolutions recently passed by the Madras Legislature Congress Party has not created grave anxiety in the Congress circles. Many, including those who respect his judgment and generally accept his standpoint, would have preferred his raising the points in the Working Committee before publicly associating himself with them.

Divergent views are being expressed by the different sections. It is clear that Mr. Rajagopalachari's suggestion for a pact with the League on the basis of conceding Pakistan after the war, should the League persist in the demand, has hardly any support inside the Congress High Command and has roused the fierce antagonism of the Hindu Maha Sabha. Mr. Nehru probably carries a larger element with him in his anxiety to rally the country to resist Japanese aggression through a National Government, but the prospects of such a development are dim—unless the British proposals are liberalised [sic] by a fresh declaration in Parliament this week.

Gandhiji's latest article, expressing the hope that Mr. Nehru and Rajaji may yet abandon their apostasy and revert to the methods of non-violence is considered to have an important bearing on the situation.

At Allahabad, the Working Committee has resolutions before it for discussion which will clarify the position in broad essentials—whether the Congress approves for instance, the scorched earth policy, which Gandhiji condemns, and even more whether the Congress will restrict its opposition to the Japanese only to non-violent methods. In one sense, many recall that history seems to be repeating itself. After the British rejection of the Poona offer, the Congress withdrew the suggestion and reverted to Gandhiji's leadership. But the circumstances to-day are vastly different. Mr. Nehru, then neutral, to-day expresses his determination to oppose the Japanese whether there is settlement with Britain or not.

Mr. Rajagopalachari is so convinced of the necessity of installation of popular governments both at the Centre and in the provinces that he regards everything else as subsidiary—even the acceptance of the principle of Pakistan and a truce with the British.

Between to-day and Thursday, when a final decision is expected to be taken, the situation may yet undergo a change if, in the interval the British Cabinet should make another gesture. If it does not, it seems likely judging from present indications in Congress circles, that the majority would prefer to go back to Gandhiji's leadership and adopt his methods.

19. N.M. Joshi Supports 'C.R.'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 26 April 1942.

Bombay, April 25

Mr. N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. (Central) in an interview regarding the resolution adopted by the Congress Legislature Party in Madras says: 'So far as the demand for Pakistan is concerned my view is that Mr. Rajagopalachari is right in advising the Congress to concede the claim of the Muslim League. Under the present circumstances we cannot get a National Government without getting the co-operation of the Muslim League and if the people of India are to take part in the defence of the country against the Japanese aggression this cannot effectively be done without the establishment of a National Government.

I, therefore, feel that the proposal of the Madras Congress Legislature Party are to be accepted.'

Mr. Joshi added: 'If the Muslim League's claim is accepted there should be no difficulty in forming a National Government in Madras but I am not sure whether the Congress can accept one policy for one province and follow different policies in other provinces without weakening the Congress as a national organization.'

20. A Contrary Viewpoint from G.V. Deshmukh

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 26 April 1942.

Loose Thinking under the Panic of Invasion

Bombay, April 25

Dr. G.V. Deshmukh, M.L.A. (Central), has issued the following statement:-

‘The Madras resolution of my Congress colleagues seems to me to be the result of loose thinking under the panic of invasion. The vital part of the resolution is the defence of the country and it is supposed that defence can be secured if

- (1) Pakistan is conceded and
- (2) Offices in the provinces are accepted by the Congress.

‘My own view of Pakistan is this. It can either be taken by the League or made as a gift by the Government.... So far as the other interests and communities are concerned, they cannot agree to this vivisection either now or in the future. With the illusive hope of a prize in the future we are creating merely another mercenary block....

‘The vital issue is defence. I for one cannot imagine how that is to be secured by bills and resolutions and in the legislatures.... Indian people will have to be prepared for their ordeal of blood and iron by creating a virile mentality after their long period of enervation and emasculation....

‘I think the Madras resolution is futile, and is the result of infantile and wishful thinking. It cannot have any effect on my country or the Congress Committee who are facing at present the stern reality of aggression and defence.’

21. E.V. Ramaswami Naicker's Reaction to the Madras Resolutions

The Hindu, 28 April 1942.

Mr. E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, Leader of the Justice Party, in the course of a statement, says:

I have read with care the resolution of the Congress Party in the Madras Legislature passed at the meeting held on the 23rd instant. The resolution gladdens me in two respects:

- (1) It recognizes that it is impossible for the people to think in terms of neutrality or passivity during the invasion of an enemy power and
- (2) It gives up the claim that Congress is the sole organization entitled to speak and act on behalf of the whole of India.

While I appreciate this realistic approach to the issues before India, I must still say that the present move is but another hectic attempt to get into office.

The claim of the Muslim League for separation has been acknowledged in a half-hearted manner. The expression ‘the lesser evil’ used in that connection proves that the real desire is not to establish communal harmony on a permanent basis but only to come back to power somehow.

Again, the second part of the resolution contemplates the establishment of a provincial Government, predominantly Congress in composition, with a leavening of the Muslim League representatives. This is not the essential representation of all parties and interests which must be

the outstanding characteristic of a national Government that may be established now. What is needed at the present moment is a completely representative Government in which all parties and interests are included and which will aim at only the effective prosecution of the war and the defence of the country. The Government must be one sworn to serve the country and must eschew party politics pending the war. This is not at all the aim of the resolution passed by the Congress Party in the Madras Legislature.

The fundamental problem of the Province, the Brahmin-non-Brahmin problem has been deliberately overlooked. In this Province, it has become possible for a small minority, the Brahmins, to dominate the other communities. The monopoly of political power and offices enjoyed by a small community, consisting only of three per cent of the population, gave rise nearly a quarter century ago to the Non-Brahmin Movement. At the time of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms the leaders of the Non-Brahmin Movement put forward claims to adequate constitutional safeguards to protect the interests of the majority of the population against the dominance of a minority community. Though statutory safeguard for a majority may seem to be an absurdity in theory, it has been necessitated in practice on account of the peculiar position which the small Brahmin community holds in the life of South India. It is not necessary to reiterate the various stages of the struggle which led to the Meston Award and the reservation of a certain number of seats in the Madras Legislature for the Non-Brahmins. At the time of the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935 the Non-Brahmin leaders did not think it necessary to press for a statutory recognition of these claims in the new constitution. The expectation of our leaders was frustrated when the Congress entered the Legislatures. A community consisting of three per cent of the population, which in an Assembly of 215 members is entitled to seven seats, has been able to secure seven times that number viz., 49 seats. Out of ten Congress Ministers, four were Brahmins.... The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Assembly were both Brahmins. The President of the Council was a Brahmin and four out of the ten Parliamentary Secretaries were Brahmins. The bitterness against Non-Brahmins is evident all round. I do hope my non-Brahmin brethren in the Congress also will realize the position. The expectations of the Scheduled Castes have been equally frustrated in that the basic principles of the Poona Pact has been deliberately violated by the Congress Party's active interference in the preliminary elections, with the result that 28 out of the 30 representatives in the Madras Legislative Assembly do not serve the purpose for which the reservation of seats was intended, but are made to serve the interests of the Congress under the threat of disciplinary action even at the sacrifice of the welfare of their community, as is evidenced by the voting on Rao Bahadur M.C. Rajah's Temple Entry Bill in the Madras Legislative Assembly, which secured the support of only two members of the Scheduled Castes....

'Demand for Dravidistan'

All this experience has therefore made it absolutely necessary to resist stoutly a repetition of such a state of affairs. Under cover of a National Government for the defence of the country, Brahmin dominance must not once again be set up. May I also know how a National Government can be established in Madras without Congress acknowledging the Dravidistan demand of the Justice Party? So far as this province is concerned, more than the Hindu-Muslim problem the Brahmin non-Brahmin problem counts. The Justice Party has never experienced any difficulty with Muslims, Muslims have always been with us because we preach and practice communal justice. There is a move to pooh-pooh the Justice Party. That will never succeed. The Justice

Party was in governance of this province for nearly 20 years before the Congress came into power. We administered and successfully administered the province under the diarchic system of government with all its defects....

I have brought out all the above facts only to prove that the popular government for the province which the resolution of the Congress Party in the Madras Legislature envisages, is but a majority government controlled by Brahmins and more to protect Brahmin interests. There should not be more than one Brahmin in any National Government that may be set up in our province. In view of this state of affairs, I must sound a note of warning to His Majesty's Government that any political settlement made with the Congress without the consent of the Justice Party and other vital elements of the country will not only be not bound on us but will be stoutly resisted. I do hope that no false step which may lead to unrest and civil strife will be taken at this hour of grave peril.

22. Note from Bombay City Special Branch (I), 1 May 1942, about Muslim League's Reactions to Madras Resolutions Home Department Special Branch File No. 1018-I, MSA.

The resignation of Mr. Rajagopalachari, the ex-Premier of Madras, from the Congress Working Committee has been received with lively satisfaction in local Muslim League circles.

The resignation of such an important Congress leader on the issue of accepting the principle of Pakistan is regarded by Muslim Leaguers as a complete vindication of the leadership of Mr. M.A. Jinnah.

The Urdu Dailies of Bombay viz (1) the 'IQBQAL' and the 'KHILAFAT' in their issue of May 1st editorially welcome the action of Mr. Rajagopalachari and express the hope that his efforts to form a Coalition Ministry in Madras, with the collaboration of the Muslim League will be crowned with success.

23. C. Rajagopalachari's Speech at the AICC Session While Moving the Resolution *The Bombay Chronicle*, 3 May 1942.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar moving the resolution acknowledging the Muslim League's claim for separation referred to the bitterness caused by his move, but said our ancestors had discovered long ago and had expressed it in the story of the churning of the ocean to get 'Amrit' (Nectar) and Lakshmi that even if we had to produce 'amrit' we had first to rouse a lot of poison, and further that someone should be not your enemy but your friend.

He was not telling the story in any pedantic spirit but because he believed in the truths conveyed by the story and he now had a clear demonstration of the truth contained in that old story.

He did not presume to be Mahadev who swallowed the poison: it was the Congress which could do so, which could stand the bitterness and burn the poison with its third eye.

Did we not have precedents in which the Congress had faced bitterness, asked Mr. Rajagopalachariar.

Did he not in Madras, ask the people to accept a change in their customs and allow the Untouchables into temples?

Friends told him at that time, with the same degree of smartness as now, that he was being hasty. Nevertheless, temple entry was now largely accepted as good.

During the Khilafat agitation also, people suffered a great deal in a matter which perhaps did not concern us at all. Yet it was the beginning of the strength of Mussalmans in this country.

If any section of our people become strong, it was a matter of congratulation.

If today his proposal added strength to Muslims and to their consciousness and political organization, it was no matter for sorrow or regret. Let us make one another as strong as possible: let us set the example in making the other community stronger and it might make us stronger too....

24. Jawaharlal Nehru on C. Rajagopalachari's Resolution: Speech at AICC Session, Allahabad, 2 May 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 294-5.

I oppose Rajaji's resolution for many reasons, but chiefly because it is not intended to bring about any settlement but the whole aim is that some kind of provisional administration should be set up. I detest this objective....

The whole idea of Pakistan must hurt anyone who has grown up and worked in India. It is becoming intolerable. I doubt if any reasonable or sensible person thought of Pakistan as a reasonable and sensible proposal, unless that person was also at the same time opposed to the whole idea of Indian independence. I have heard it said that a Muslim League spokesman had made it clear to Sir Stafford Cripps during the recent negotiations that there should be no National Government and that it should not have full powers till some demands of the Muslims were recognized. This is a position which is totally intolerable. With people who put forward such proposals, I can have no compromise. But I want the British Government to assist me in opposing the idea of Pakistan. So far as I am concerned, I would be damned forever. The Muslim League does not represent a great majority of the Indian Muslims but it does represent a section of them and I have tried my level best to win that body over, but what is the use of doing anything to ally myself with the people who are always putting forward petty demands. I stand on the platform of Indian independence.

25. The Congress Socialist View: Yusuf Meherally's Opposition to the Rajagopalachari Resolution on Pakistan

The Bombay Chronicle, 3 May 1942.

Mr. Yusuf Meherally opposed 'the surprising resolution that Rajaji has chosen to spring up on us and commended to the House with panic-stricken eloquence. (Cheers). He concedes Pakistan but seems to demand Dravidistan. If I oppose the resolution, it is because I believe from the point of view of Musalmans themselves, the slogan is disastrous. The whole thing is politically retrograde, economically unsound and culturally ridiculous. The great point about it is that the Muslim League which has raised the slogan has been wise enough to keep it as a slogan and not make a scheme. But here is Rajaji with his weight of years coming forward and asking the Congress to concede something which is unspecified.' Mr. Meherally characterized it as 'a tragedy of sheer intellect,' and also criticized Pandit Nehru for making statements that lent themselves to misrepresentation by the Government of India.

26. Defeat of the Rajagopalachari Resolution and His Reactions

The Bombay Chronicle, 3 May 1942.

Mr. Rajagopalachariar's resolution was rejected by 120 votes against 15 and Mr. Jagatnarian Lal's resolution¹ was passed by 92 votes to 17. Mr. Rajagopalachariar announced that he did not wish to move his second resolution, important though it was from the viewpoint of the Madras Presidency. He would not move it because there was no time, but he had not given it up and he wanted to warn the House that Madras might be cut off and no amount of talks of Indian Unity would avail them thereafter.

¹ Mr. Jagat Narian Lal's resolution was as follows:

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress therefore cannot agree to any such proposal.

27. Maulana Azad's Concluding Remarks on the Madras Resolution

The Bombay Chronicle, 3 May 1942.

Rajaji has put his point of view before us. He believes that the Congress-League differences are harmful to the cause of the country and should be ended. On this, I say, there could not be two opinions in this House. We also feel the same way. But I am astonished that if Rajaji had this end in view he should have adopted the procedure he did. In fact, I feel that the method and procedure adopted by Rajaji have done the greatest harm to this cause and I hold Rajaji is fully responsible for it.

Rajaji of all persons, continued the Maulana, who was in the inner counsels of the Congress knew all about the attempts made by us for the solution of those differences. I have personally done my best in that direction. For five years I made attempt after attempt. Some of the matters have come to your knowledge. But there are some who have not been told by me to anybody, because I thought it would be better to tell them if something definite had turned up. I left nothing undone. I declare that those, who had the reins of the Muslim League in their hands built up an impenetrable wall against the Congress.

Conferences with Jinnah

I met Mr. Jinnah twice. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru corresponded with him and Gandhiji also met Mr. Jinnah. Gandhiji did his best. Sometimes, public opinion was even against us for this persistence of ours. Then an impossible situation was sprung upon us. We were told that the question was not a Hindu-Muslim question, but it was a League-Congress question. We were faced with two preliminary premises—firstly, our history of the past fifty years or so was to be obliterated and the Congress was to reduce itself to a Hindu body only.

Secondly, we were to recognize the claim that the Muslim League was the sole representative of Muslims. These premises were impossible and nothing could be achieved with them. Today the Congress has large numbers of Muslims as members. But that is not the question. Even if there was not a single Muslim, Sikh or Christian in the Congress, the Congress so long as it takes a national stand and watches national interests, it represents the whole nation and is not a communal or sectional body. The result of this attitude was that we were lost in these preliminaries and we could not get down to the real problem.

The Maulana continued that they had suggested through Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan at the time of the Karachi Session of the Muslim League that the League should nominate five representatives and they could then sit together and thrash out the whole situation. That would be the correct procedure. I always thought that the attempt would be worth making even if it did not achieve success. There would not result any harm from it.

The question concerns the whole country, said the Maulana. Personalities and sentiments do not count. It is a matter concerning the entire nation.

Rajaji's method was wrong and would harm the very cause which he was advocating. It was not a question of somebody putting up a demand and our conceding it. As I have said, the correct procedure would be to nominate representatives and to discuss the questions involved. Even now, I am prepared to call the Working Committee and ask them to nominate five representatives to meet five representatives of the Muslim League to find a settlement.

Pakistan is against the spirit of Islam, declared Maulana Azad. It could not be said that one part of a country where the Muslims happen to be in a majority was 'pak' and other parts were 'napak'.

The details of Pakistan have not been clarified. If Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan is asked, he says one thing. Mr. Jinnah says something else, and the resolution itself means something else. The whole thing has been kept vague. In a case like this, of what is a responsible organization like ours to take note?

Maulana Azad said it was wrong for any political party to strike up an attitude which would be like a deadweight on political advance. It would be wrong to say 'This is our demand and if it is not allowed, we will have nothing to do with you.'

Referring to misapprehensions that there might exist as regards the Muslims in the Provinces, the Maulana said that as early as the Ramgarh Session, he had made it clear in his Presidential Address that what he contemplated was a Provincial Government and Provincial Autonomous Units so constituted that the Central Government would exercise the least interference with the internal autonomy of the Provinces.

28. Bombay Muslim League's Reaction to C. Rajagopalachari's Resignation from the Congress Working Committee; Local Congressmen's Sense of Regret: Extract from Report of Bombay City SB (I), 1 May 1942

Home Department Special File No. 1018-I, MSA.

The resignation of Mr. Rajagopalachari the Ex-Premier of Madras from the Congress Working committee has been received with lively satisfaction in local Muslim League circles.

The resignation of such an important Congress leader on the issue of accepting the principle of Pakistan is regarded by Muslim Leaguers as a complete vindication of the leadership of Mr. M.A. Jinnah.

The Urdu Dailies of Bombay viz (1) the 'IQBAL' and the 'KHILAFAT' in their issue of May 1st editorially welcome the action of Mr. Rajagopalachari and express the hope that his efforts to form a Coalition Ministry in Madras, with the collaboration of the Muslim League will be crowned with success.

The local Congressmen regret losing his leadership as a 'Deputy Gandhi'.

29. Letter from Secretary, Karnatak PCC, to General Secretary, AICC,
2 May 1942: Condemnation of Madras Resolutions
AICC Papers, F. No. P-10/1942-6, NMML.

Dear Friend,

.... Following is the full text of the resolution of the Council of the Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee regarding the Madras Legislative Party resolution:-

‘The Council of the K.P.C.C. condemns both the parts of the resolution passed by the Madras Legislative Party on 23-4-1942 because they run counter to the spirit of Indian Unity and are such as sow seeds of disruption and promote fissiparous tendencies among Communities and Provinces. The Council urges upon the A.I.C.C. to put down betimes in no uncertain terms such attempts at this critical hour in the history of India.’

30. Reactions from the Viceroy to Rajagopalachari’s Stand:
Lord Linlithgow to L.S. Amery, 5 May 1942
TOP, Vol. 2, p. 35.

4 ... It is too early to see how much will come out of this, but, as you know, I personally should not have the slightest objection to his [Rajagopalachari’s] forming a government if he could do so and his government is prepared to support the war effort. But we have yet to see, I suspect, how opinion will be divided in the Madras Legislature, and the Gandhian party may prove to be sufficiently strong to make any question of a government backed by a majority academic. Whether that is the case or not, the episode has been an interesting one, and Rajagopalachariar has said a good deal which will be of assistance to us. He has displayed far greater realism than the more non-violent section of the Congress.

31. C. Rajagopalachari after the Allahabad Meeting: ‘I Have Done the Right Thing’
The Bombay Chronicle, 7 May 1942.

New Delhi, May 5.

The stand he had taken at the All-India Congress Committee meeting was explained by Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar addressing a meeting at the South Indian Association to-night.

Mr. Rajagopalachariar declared: ‘I feel I have done the right thing. I do not feel at all ashamed. So many people have refused to think and out of 135, 120 have refused to think along the right lines.’

He referred to the black flag demonstration and said that it did not surprise him.

‘I expected much more bitterness. I saw nothing. At the All India Congress Committee I talked to the people. I expected angry faces and angry words. I expected very bad treatment but I did not see any such thing.

In the Committee meeting the President was very much angry with me. He was feeling that I had given a very bad shock to very dear friends. But the Committee as a whole appeared in good mirth. And when I spoke I did not see in the faces any sign of much displeasure. I

was really pleased with the reception I had and in my mind I was thoroughly convinced that I was right.'

Mr. Rajagopalachariar asserted that he felt confident that his views must prevail.

Limitations of Non-violence

Referring to non-violence, Mr. Rajagopalachariar said that non-violence had certain limitations although Mahatma Gandhi might not accept them.

He differed from those who held that since they were not in a position to defend the country they could only do so by non-violent non-co-operation.

It was easier, he said, to resist the enemy with arms, and non-violent non-cooperation meant that they would submit to him in a ghastly manner.

Mr. Rajagopalachariar concluding pleaded for a National Army and National Front if they were to resist aggression.

He thought they had to settle the Muslim affair first, and though it was an unpopular thing he would continue to press for his demand.

Answering a question Mr. Rajagopalachariar said that if the Madras Legislature were not intimidated by the A.I.C.C. proceedings and accepted his demand, he would fight the Congress just as he would fight the Japanese.

32. Letter from Y. Srikrishna Murti, Narsapur, West Godavari District, Madras Presidency, 7 May 1942, to Maulana Azad, Asking for the Expulsion of C. Rajagopalachari from the AICC
AICC Papers, F. No. G-1/1942, NMML.

Dear Mr. President,

It is with regret that I note Sri. C. Rajagopalachariar's two speeches delivered at Delhi. May I point out to you at the outset that Sri. C. Rajagopalachariar is wholly wrong when he thinks that he carries the entire Madras behind him. We are one with Mr. T. Prakasam.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari still wants to propagate his theories against the wishes of the A.I.C.C. Under the present circumstances, it is your duty, I think, to expel him from the [sic] and debar him from being a member of that organization for not less than 11 years. The Congress was not slow to expel Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, most probably very wrongly. This does not mean that I support Mr. Bose.

I wrote to Mahatmaji previously about C.R.'s wrongdoings in Madras. I also told him were the British Government to offer him an executive councillorship for Finance, Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar would accept it whole hearted even if defence and independence were not given to Indians. His is a slavish mentality. He is an out and out office hunter.... But Mahatmaji did not reply. He might have thought that the attack against his 'relative' is premature.

There are a few fellows of this sort in Madras. Mr. B. Gopalareddi, Mr. A. Kaleswara Rao, Mr. B. Sambamurti, Mr. S. Satyamurti, Dr. Subbarayan and some others bring discredit to the Congress organization. It will be better for the Congress to get rid of them as soon as possible. Otherwise you will have to fight a war against them as the time lapses.

.... Mr. Rajagopalachariar thinks that British government will not give India either Dominion Status or Independence after the War. He wants to take the opportunity afforded by Cripps's visit to secure for India as much as possible. His fears, I say, are baseless. It is silly to think that

Britain grants India her Independence as a boon. India will have to fight out to issue before her and take Swaraj out of the hands of the British. For this she will have to cripple the Cripps (I mean the British). I commend the stand taken by the A.I.C.C....

33. S. Satyamurti's Criticism of C. Rajagopalachari's Move

The Indian Express, 8 May 1942; Also Reproduced in K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. II, pp. 356-9.

RAJAJI HAS QUEERED THE CONGRESS PITCH. MADRAS MUST REJECT THIS DANGEROUS MOVE. SATYAMURTI'S CALL TO TAMIL NAD

Madras
7 May 1942

Mr. S. Satyamurti, MLA (Central), who returned from New Delhi last night, has issued the following statement:

The All India Congress Committee gave the only possible lead to the country under the existing circumstances. Whatever Sir Stafford Cripps may now say to justify the failure of his mission, Britain has up to this moment shown no desire even to share with the people of India the responsibility for the defence of their own country. Sir Stafford Cripps is indulging in a terminological inexactitude when he says that no agreement was reached because some of the elements in India wanted the British government to go further in handing over complete power to India's majority community than he considered possible consistently 'with our obligations to defend India and our promise to the great communal minorities.' The Congress never wanted, and does not want to-day, that the British government should hand over complete power to India's majority community. What was wanted was a composite national government in which all the minorities, or almost all the minorities, will be represented; and barring the Muslim League, neither the Sikhs nor the Nationalist Muslims objected to the demand for a national government.

Let there be no mistake about it. India wants to fight Japan and defeat her design on India. She cannot fight in the modern sense, because the government will not let the people of the country cooperate on honourable and self-respecting terms. That is why the AICC has asked the people to offer non-violent non-cooperation to Japanese aggression. Whatever Japan's design may be, the people of India will resist them. The government seems to be determined not to obtain the people's co-operation. Let them go their own way, we will go ours. I am confident that India will emerge free from and after this war.

The pitch of the Congress has been queered by the unfortunate attempt of Rajaji to please the Muslim League and Mr. Jinnah and somehow get a so-called national government installed in the centre and coalition governments in the provinces. To concede Pakistan to the Muslim League and to Mr. Jinnah on the express ground that they are 'children', that they do not know what they want and therefore they can indulge their whims in the hope that ultimately the children will learn to give up Pakistan is insulting the intelligence of Mr. Jinnah and of the Muslim League. My own personal view is that the average Muslim politician is much cleverer than the average Hindu politician.

Moreover, the position of the Congress is absolutely clear in the matter. We have always considered, and we will always consider, the division of this country as a major disaster. We can

never 'agree' to that. We will never be parties to that. But, at the same time, we undertake that in the event of certain territorial units, by decisive majorities, insisting on keeping out of the Indian federation, we will not 'compel' them. That is a perfectly understandable position. That is as far as Congressmen or Nationalistic, patriotic Hindus and Muslims and other minorities can or need go.

Sri Rajagopalachari's move has been decisively defeated by the AICC. It will not bring the Muslim League into line with the Congress. It will not impress the government. It will only be a handle to Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Amery to do false and mischievous propaganda against India.

Rajaji's move has had another result, namely that of making the position of all the Congressmen, and especially of Nationalist Muslims, very difficult. Now the cry will be all over the country that, if a Hindu of the stature of Rajaji is willing to concede Pakistan, why should other Hindu Congressman and especially Nationalist Muslims deny that claim? But I hope the Nationalist Muslims and the other Congressmen will realise that Rajaji's move represents his own view and not the Congress or the public view. We must now stand together, and sound commonsense and reason will assert themselves.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has made a very important, constructive and useful suggestion that the Congress Working Committee will immediately appoint five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League if they desire to do so. This is claimed in some quarters as the first fruits of Rajaji's move. It is a mistake. The Congress has been always willing to meet the representatives of the Muslim League, and these representatives of the Congress, the Muslim League and other minorities will meet to discuss all outstanding questions with a view to promote and conserve the national unity in the present crisis. The primary object is not to establish a national government because the British government seem to have no use for a national government. But in these very grave and critical times, a united National Front is absolutely necessary for the present and for the future of India. I sincerely hope that the Muslim League will respond to the gesture on the part of the Congress President. I support the Congress President's move most strongly....

Rajaji does not stop with this. He wants a coalition government in the province of Madras, whatever may happen to the rest of India and whatever the rest of India may or may not do. This is a suicidal policy. I have always been, and am to-day, of the opinion that a subject nation fighting non-violently for freedom must use every strategic position in order to win freedom for the country. I was therefore for office acceptance till almost the other day; but to-day when Japan is knocking at, and almost seems to open, our door, there is no power or office to take, either in the centre or in the provinces unless full responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the country, external and internal, is conceded to us on the basis of India's independence. In the absence of that, accepting office in Madras will only be expressing willingness to carry out other people's orders.

I refuse to believe that Madras will be cut off and that Madras will be in a much more peculiar position than Assam, Bengal or Orissa. I therefore hope that this move will fail, as it deserves to fail. It has received some support in Tamil Nad for some time, but I am here now. I know the heart of Tamil Nad beats true to the Congress call and I am confident that Tamil Nad will soon line up with Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka which form the provinces contributing to the membership of the Madras legislature and reject this dangerous move.

But there is one work which lies before us all, the constructive programme, especially self-sufficiency and self-protection for the villages. Let us all put our shoulders to the wheel of that work and all will yet be well with us.

34. Maulana Azad to S. Satyamurti about Madras and Its Contribution to the Congress, 9 May 1942

K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. II, p. 359.

My dear Satyamurti,

.... While addressing the AICC and after the voting, Rajaji said a thing which gave me much pain. He said that he wanted to warn the house that Madras might be cut off, and no amount of talk of Indian unity would avail them thereafter. Should we really expect such thing from Madras? Would she like to chalk out her own lonely way, after separating from the Congress? I am certain that it will not happen. Madras which has always remained a greater centre of Congress activities during the last 50 years and whose loyalty has always proved to be above suspicion, cannot go against the decisions and policy of the Congress and thus shatter the unity of our country during the greatest trial of our United Strength today. I hope you and other friends of Madras would soon bring home this reality to all the country. You have asked me to give time to Madras. I shall keep it in mind. But for the present I have had a talk with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru about it. He has promised to tour Madras after his return from Kulu. I hope his tour would help your work in every way.

I am intending to leave for Bombay on Tuesday to meet Gandhiji, where he has gone to stay for a week. My address would be care of Mr. Bhulabhai Desai there.

Yours sincerely,

Abul Kalam Azad

35. Letter from A. Kaleswara Rao, Camp Bezwada, 12 May 1942, to C. Rajagopalachari Stating That People of Coastal Districts Are against Pakistan

C. Rajagopalachari Papers, Roll No. 2, Microfilm, NMML.

Respected Rajaji,

.... With regard to the work you have taken up, the people of the coastal districts are almost cent per cent against Pakistan (vivisection of India). I had myself written strongly against it in the Telegu press and spoken vehemently against it on the platform several times.... Some bad star has come. How will this go? When will this go? Cent per cent confidence in you was right before these events. We only pray to God to find a way out soon so that you may again become the popular hero.

Hope you are quite alright.

With kind regards

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/- A. Kaleswara Rao

36. C. Rajagopalachari's Speech at the Gokhale Hall in Madras
The Times of India, 15 May 1942

UNITY NEED OF THE HOUR

Madras Leader on Congress Apathy

Madras, May 14

Between the Congress Working Committee and himself it was a matter of difference of opinion and not of difference in action, said Mr. C. Rajagopalachari addressing a large gathering in Tamil at the Gokhale Hall here this evening. Some members of the audience, shouting in the name of the Hindu Sabha, tried occasionally to disturb the meeting. Mr. Rajagopalachari rebuking them said that that was not the way to advance the cause of the Hindu Sabha or secure public respect for that organization.

When Mr. Rajagopalachari said that if the A.I.C.C. had accepted his proposals people in Madras would have welcomed them enthusiastically there was loud applause. The question then, he said, was not a doubt on the merits. If the question was right, he could not give it up. It was his duty to press it on the organization which had the fate of the country in its hands. His proposals had been widely welcomed by the Muslims all over the country and what a great change in their attitude there would have been if the Congress had accepted them....

37. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to Bombay Suburban and Gujarat
 Congressmen, 15 May 1942, about How He Differs from
 C. Rajagopalachari
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 108-9.

.... But I emphatically differ from Rajaji. For, with what can I fight the Japs? The British are the immediate aggressors. Indeed I believe that the entire danger to India would be less if the British withdraw from here. I do not think Japan will invade India then. She wants to fight Britain.... And therefore it is possible that when the British withdraw we shall be able to come to terms with Japan. And if even then she does not listen, then I have the same weapon against Japan that I have against Britain. Japan will not get a drop of water in India. We shall see to that. But resistance to the Japanese by whom? By a free India, not by an India who is not asked whether she would enter the war or not. Here I may point out that I disagree with Rajaji. Rajaji is an old colleague of mine, and my love for him remains as strong as ever. But I do not feel like Rajaji that of the two Britain is better and can be dealt with later—now, Japan. For me an exploiter of other nations is an exploiter, whether he be an imperialist or a totalitarian. Names do not matter. Besides, who says the British are better? I do not want to say for a moment that Rajaji will accept National government outside the Congress, i.e., without its sanction. But have the British offered it? Rajaji is prepared to help them in every way against the Japanese. Then why the hitch? Simply because they do not want us to get the power.

They will not give it. They are what they are and nothing will change them. Yes, Cripps has gone back. But do not they negotiate again? Through Sapru or Jayakar or even Rajaji? Because, as I said, they do not want to. Their time to go has come. Rajaji concedes Pakistan. But has Jinnah even moved an inch to discuss matters with him? For Jinnah's game is to bring Government pressure on the Congress, and Congress pressure on the Government, or both.

Rajaji says, let India be split up. But I cannot agree. I cannot swallow the splitting of India. I alone know what pain the thought has caused me. Rajaji is an old friend and an astute politician. And only I know what I suffered to let him go. But he is strong-willed. He believes that he will achieve Hindu-Muslim unity.... I know the general confusion. You find Maulana says one thing. Jawahar another, Rajaji a third and now I a fourth thing. What are we to do? My advice to you is to weigh all the four and decide which to accept for yourself. I have not yet met Jawahar nor Maulana. But as you know well, although Jawahar and myself have differed quite often, he has always been with me as far as action goes. And I hope to win him to me. As for Maulana, we have always stood together since years. So I hope to reduce the four different notes to two. Then there will only be my voice and the voice of Rajaji and you can decide which of the two to follow. I cannot say....

38. Letter from Secretary, Kerala Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, 15 May 1942, Asking for Instructions on Attitude to Be Adopted towards C. Rajagopalachari
AICC Papers, F. No. P-11/1942-6, NMML.

Dear friend,

Rajaji is touring the Madras Province on his new mission. He has written to me the Secretary of the P.C.C. and some other friends to make arrangements for his meeting. I would like to know whether we can do it. It would greatly help and direct people in the proper direction if the President or Secretary of the A.I.C.C. would make authoritative statement about the attitude that Congress Committees and elected members of P.C.C.s should adopt in this matter. He is reaching Calicut on 24th. So please give a lead before some of our friends actually co operate with him. There may be some legislators who out of personal loyalty may feel obliged to go about with him. Before any such thing happens kindly let me know whether we can co operate with Rajaji and if so to what extent.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- C.K. Govindan Nair
Secretary

39. The *Shahid* on the 'Dictatorial Attitude of the Congress',
16 May 1942
Home Department Special File No. 1018-I, MSA.

Referring to the fate of the Madras resolution at the Allahabad session of the All India Congress Committee, the *Shahid* writes: Just as the dictatorial attitude of the Congress terminated the prestige of the Congress in Bengal similarly the Congress has also allowed its prestige to suffer in South India by rejecting the resolution of Mr. Rajagopalachari which was worthy of attention. Is there any doubt about the Congress being adversely affected in Bombay and other provinces in India after Madras? God alone knows why the Congress spends all its energy in raising the bogey of Pakistan. If the Congress does not change this dictatorial attitude the responsible question [*sic*] in India will be constrained to admit the bitter truth that the Congress High Command dreams of establishing arbitrary and despotic rule in India.

40. C. Rajagopalachari Undertakes to Make the Muslim League Respond to Congress Proposals

The Bombay Chronicle, 19 May 1942.

Madras, 17 May

'If the Congress agreed to make a settlement with the Muslim League, as suggested by him, it was his responsibility to make the Muslim League respond. If he failed, the failure would be his and not that of the Congress,' declared Mr. C. Rajagopalachari addressing a public meeting to-night at the Congress House when he further explained the proposal he put forward at the Allahabad meeting of the A.I.C.C. and the reasons that weighed with him in seeking public support for the same though it had been rejected by the A.I.C.C.

Mr. Bulusu Sambamurti, Speaker of the Madras Assembly presided.

Mr. Rajagopalachari said that they should realize when he resigned from the Congress Working Committee—a much coveted place of honour in the councils of the nation—to advocate a certain cause, the matter must be terribly important.

The safety of the country was at stake and he was anxious for its protection. The aggressor would not wait till they leisurely discussed their problems and came to a decision. Japan had realized what a good place India was.

India commanded a strategic position. India shone like a jewel in the Indian Ocean and there was also Ceylon like a pendant to that jewel.

Not Begging

Proceeding, Mr. Rajagopalachari said that the attitude taken by some persons on this question was that as the British Government had refused to transfer power into Indian hands, with a view to developing national strength for offering resistance, nothing could be done.

If a doctor refused to attend on a sick patient for some reason or other, would they sit quiet with folded hands? Would they not try some remedy however unscientific it might be? Even if Britain ceased to assist them, they must resist the aggressor.

Britain did not help them form a national Government in this country. What was the next step to be taken? The Muslim League was an influential group and it was not co-operating with the Congress. They could not shut their eyes to the fact that the League was an important body.

If they could come to terms with the League they could exert their joint influence and get what the British Government refused to give now.

The objection raised to this course was that they should not go to Britain on bended knees and that the next move must come from Britain.

He would say that the course he suggested could in no sense be regarded as amounting to begging.

If the Congress and the League succeeded in settling their differences, there would arise a new power out of that union which no one would be able to resist. They could use that power to get what they wanted.

Even if National Government was not made possible after Congress-League agreement, the speaker would assure them that the power generated by such a unity would be as effective as the strength of a national Government.



41. Missile Hurlled at C. Rajagopalachari in a Meeting in Madura

The Bombay Chronicle, 22 May 1942.

Madura, May 20

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari addressed a public meeting attended by nearly 30,000 people at Tamkam Park this evening which was marred by an incident at the close of the proceedings when following demonstrations and raising of anti-Pakistan slogans, a missile was thrown at him.

Mr. Rajagopalachari at once stepped into the crowd in front of the dais declaring, 'You want to attack me? Come on, here I am. You cannot suppress me by these threats. If I am to be afraid of you how am I to face Japanese aggressors if they come?'

Coming back to the dais Mr. Rajagopalachari exhorted the audience not to be upset by the incident and not to give way to fear on his account. 'If they want to have a bout with me, I am not afraid' he declared.

He then left the meeting escorted by Messrs. Sambamurti Vaidyanatha Iyer and others and a cordon of volunteers.

In the course of his speech Mr. Rajagopalachari explained his proposal for a Congress-League settlement and said, 'Resist all aggression. The resistance would be effective only if the people stand united. Let not our anger against Britain for the past record against India blind us to the supreme need of the hour, namely defending the motherland from new dangers.'

Mr. Rajagopalachari who is staying at the residence of Mr. A. Vaidyanatha Iyer, President, Tamilnad Harijan Sevak Sangh, had talks with a number of Congressmen and others earlier in the afternoon.

42. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech at a Public Meeting in Lahore on 21 May 1942: C. Rajagopalachari Treading the Wrong Path

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 321-2.

.... Rajaji possessed a very keen intellect but that intellect is of no use when he wants to cripple the weapon which the country has forged to achieve India's freedom as a result of twenty-two years of hard work and innumerable sacrifices.

It pains me to enter into a controversy with an erstwhile colleague but I am doing so because it pains me even more to see Rajagopalachari pursuing the path which he is now treading. That path is not only wrong but positively dangerous to the country and by following that path Rajaji is making the achievement of that object difficult for which he himself is working. In fact, Rajaji has acted in this manner in his anxiety to form a national government in Madras. Now a national government in a province, especially the province of Madras, cannot be formed without first admitting before the Governor and the Governor-General that it was a folly to have come out of office. In these days of war, however, any government in any province, and particularly in Madras, will not be able to do anything beyond perhaps getting some drinking water served to the thirsty or giving to the hungry a loaf of bread to eat. During these days in any danger zone not the national government but the military shall rule.

Rajaji has acted most irresponsibly by getting a resolution passed by a provincial legislature party at a time when only a few days after a meeting of the Working Committee was to be held, and he has thus been responsible for dividing the Congress into two camps. My only satisfaction is that Rajaji has not succeeded, and no section of the Congress is with him. Rajaji

has chosen a very wrong time for his move and his action has added to the difficulties which are not a few already. There are a few persons who are now issuing statements in support of Mr. Rajagopalachari. It is surprising that being in the Congress they are trying to explain their position individually as if they cannot remain without opening their hearts. The statement issued by the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee is a case in point.¹

¹ On 9 May 1942 Mian Iftikharuddin, the President of the Punjab PCC had stated that he had supported Rajagopalachari's resolution on Pakistan at the A.I.C.C. session as no community could be forced to remain in the Union of India against its wishes, although secession would not be in the interests of the Muslims. Unity by nonviolent means was possible only if the right of secession was recognized.

43. C. Rajagopalachari's Reply to Jawaharlal Nehru's Criticism

The Bombay Chronicle, 25 May 1942.

Dindigul, May 23

Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar in a statement to the press replying to Pandit Nehru's criticism of his proposal says:

'Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has said that the proposal that I have made for a Congress-League settlement is detrimental to the interests of our country. Had he held any other view he would have warmly supported my proposal at the A.I.C.C. meeting. He says that Congress has been fashioned into a weapon of great potency as a result of 22 years of innumerable sacrifices. This is quite true, but is it not all the more a tragedy that in this supreme crisis Congress must watch things like a spectator?

'My proposal would have cut the entanglement and enabled Congress to fulfil what Pandit Nehru has stated to be his ardent wish. He had declared that it is his desire that India should participate in the war and transform her sympathy with Russia and China into action. It is no use allowing one's ardent wishes to be neutralized and rendered sterile at a time when the situation calls for a dynamic reorientation. My proposal does mean a compromise and a sacrifice of certain cherished things, but it would have released the energy of the nation and enabled united action to be organized against the danger and destruction that threatens us now and which, if unresisted, will put an end for ever to all our hopes.

Admitted Fact

'If the majority of the people in a particular territorial unit want separation, it can never be withheld from them by a Free India. Gandhiji, the Congress and Jawaharlalji have clearly admitted this over and over again. No one stands in the way of every effort at persuasion and the development of confidence. We could all make this effort, but after giving the assurance that no coercive unity would, in any event, be imposed upon the people of any territorial unit who decide to separate. It would be open to everyone from now to preach unity and to work for it until the danger to India ends and the time arrives for the consideration of forms of her free Government. My proposal did not mean the surrender of our plea for unity or there should be any lack of effort in that direction. The only thing involved in my proposal was the removal of the possibility of overruling the wishes of the people in any area against their expressed will.

'Those Negative Appeals!

‘Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru warns the audience against slogans and foolish jubilation over the successes of the enemy, but of what avail are such negative appeals? How I wish he could discover some way actively to wrest power to organize the defence of the country which alone can save us from indifference and prevent the freedom of India from being stabbed before it is born.’

44. Letter from Rajendra Prasad to S. Satyamurti, 22 May 1942,
Advising That It Is for Madras Legislature Party to Take Action
against C. Rajagopalachari

K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 360–1.

My dear Mr. Satyamurti,

I have been touring my province since my return from Allahabad. I have received your letter here today. I have followed Rajaji's propaganda in the press. I think it is for the party of the Madras legislature in the first instance to take action repudiating his action. It was the party which gave him the mandate in the first instance to move the AICC and they must now move first. I am however writing to Sardar Vallabhbhai about your suggestion.

As regards the Working Committee, you must have noticed how hard it was with some of us. As the crisis is thickening we must prepare ourselves to face it with courage and clear vision. We cannot have either if we do not freely and frankly choose our line of actions. Any patchwork in critical times is bound to break down under the pressure of events. Mahatmaji is not satisfied with our resolution and I have written to Moulana Saheb as also Gandhiji has done. We shall await developments but I shall not precipitate anything.

45. Vallabhbhai Patel to Mahadev Desai: C. Rajagopalachari Going
against Resolutions of the Congress Working Committee
CWSVP, Vol. 9, p. 115.

.... On the other side Raja is spreading poison. I have received letter from Satyamurti. It is not good that Raja in all matters uses the name of Bapu. After having entered legislature on Congress ticket and after the A.I.C.C. has passed the resolution to indulge in such propaganda is like breaking the oath which he has taken. If he wants to do that he must resign from the legislature. As per pledge he is bound to act according to the resolutions of the Working Committee. At present he has a mania for fighting with Japanese. So he won't hear anything.

46. Article by J.B. Kripalani Titled 'Rajaji Quotes Scriptures',
23 May 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. G-2/1942, NMML.

In the meetings he addresses and the interviews he gives Sri Rajagopalacharya complacently quotes Gandhiji to prove to his own satisfaction and that of his admirers that there is really no difference between the stand taken by Gandhiji and himself on the Pakistan issue. It is not the first time that Rajaji has quoted Gandhiji, nor is it going to be the last....

Let us analyse fact. Rajaji wants to concede Pakistan, whatever it may mean, here and now, while the British Government is yet all powerful in India, to purchase the support of the League for a so-called national government. This attitude may be right or wrong but certainly it is not Gandhiji's attitude. Gandhiji has made it clear that he will allow free choice to Muslims to remain inside or outside the Indian union or federation, in a free India. He does not talk of the League but of the Muslim community. Many influential Muslims think likewise. Rajaji considers the League synonymous with the Muslim community. At least in practice, he would concede this point in favour of the League. If this position is conceded it means that the Muslims outside the League, the Congress and national Muslims, the Momins, the Shiahhs, the Ahrars, and the members of the Jamiat are outside the Muslim community and the League is the only and the sole representative of that community. Whom then does the Congress represent? Virtually only the Hindus. This is exactly the position taken up by Mr. Jinnah and which has always been repudiated by Gandhiji and the Congress. On this point all negotiations in the past have broken down. Sri Rajagopalacharya as member of the Working Committee has opposed this position in the past. There is therefore a fundamental difference between Rajaji's present stand with that of Gandhiji and the Congress.

The free choice to the Muslims of India, apart from the League, is to be given them when the power that puts hindrance in the way of unity is removed. It is Gandhiji's position and that of the Congress that whatever differences there are between the Hindus and the Muslims are capable of solution, if the hindrance of British government is removed. The British by their uniform policy of divide and rule have not only fostered differences but patronized and encouraged them. Rajaji has accepted this proposition in the past.

.... From its inception and throughout its career of effort and sacrifice undergone by members of all communities, the Congress has worked for the whole of united India and for no particular part of it. So much is this the case that the majority of Congressmen especially the masses, have progressively lost the sense of provincial and communal separateness. To grant Pakistan in advance of freedom is to arrest this process and is to turn back the hands of the clock by at least fifty years of national effort and accomplishment. And this for what? For a national government which we are plainly told can not be established now. It is the present that counts today as Rajaji has often reminded us. No country in the world knows what is going to be its fate in the future. What a country has a right to believe in the present gloom is that the future will take care of itself if it acts properly and justly in the present. If we begin by conceding the unreasonable demands of any community we shall be sowing the seeds of a bad Karma. Also if we can concede Pakistan here and now what right have we not to concede the same freedom to the Sikhs and Hindus of the Punjab and the Hindus of Bengal.... We must also concede the demands of the princes to purchase their good will. To advocate such policies is not to bring about unity but discord and chaos.

.... The common and vital point in which the Congress is at one with Gandhiji is that the question of non accession of any part of India cannot be accepted beforehand, that is before independence is achieved and the people are really free to decide the issue unhampered by the influence of a foreign government buttressed by an army of occupation....

.... What the President and his colleagues of the Working Committee objected to against Rajaji was that by his advocacy of Pakistan and specially by the manner he had done it he had for the time being at least sown the apple of discord. What Cripps was not allowed to do by the rejection of his proposals, has been accomplished by Rajaji. As soon as the resolutions

passed under Rajaji's lead, were published in the press, the floodgates of controversy were opened. There were protests from every quarter. People were so anxious about this point of unity, that, at the least suggestion of disruption they became apprehensive and even panicky....

But let us examine the positive assertion of free choice in the Delhi resolution¹ which Rajaji quotes with approval and which he fondly thinks supports his stand. The Delhi resolution says 'The committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian unit against their will.' This is not the first time that Congress has expressed such sentiments. Yet mark the words 'People of any territorial unit.' Rajaji's proposition allows freedom of choice only to the League and to nobody else. The members of the League are not the only people living in any particular territorial area. Not even the Muslims are exclusively the residents of any area. Take Punjab and Bengal as examples. The Congress proposition lays down that the people of any area shall not be coerced to join any union against their will. By the grant of Pakistan will not 45 per cent of Hindus and Sikhs and perhaps at least a like percentage of the Hindus in Bengal be coerced to live in the Pakistan union against their will? The clear meaning of the phrase used, as Rajaji well knows, for the point was discussed, is that no extensive group be it Muslim, Hindu or Sikh will be coerced to remain or not to remain in a particular union against their own will. No other meaning can be given to the language used. Anyway when there is a dispute about interpretation the Working Committee is the final authority in the matter and not Sri Rajagopalacharya however learned and eminent he be....

Let therefore Rajaji speak in his own voice with the authority of his undoubted learning and weight, which is considerable, and not seek to confuse the issue by quoting now Gandhiji and now Congress resolutions.

¹ This resolution was passed by the Congress Working Committee in July 1940.

47. From Vallabhbhai Patel to S. Satyamurti: C. Rajagopalachari Doing Injustice to M.K. Gandhi, 23 May 1942

K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. 2, p. 360

My dear Satyamurti,

.... I think Rajaji is doing injustice to Gandhiji if he uses his name. It is clear to me that he has no right to carry on this propaganda after the Allahabad resolution of the AICC. As a member of the legislature he is bound by the pledge which binds him to obey all directions and decisions of the Congress executive. But, unfortunately, big people often set wrong examples and disregard ordinary rules of etiquette and discipline. Rajaji is one of them. You know my views about his attitude. He has done tremendous mischief and harm to the Congress organization. To the country's cause he has done no less disservice. But, I would not be surprised if some day he throws away the sponge and retires altogether from public life, in case he does not get enough support.

Why does not the party pull him up or has he got majority on his side from the Congress Assembly Party? It is for them to decide the question of his leadership. It is no use my asking him to explain or to attempt to take any action against him in case he has got majority over there. The Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee's resolution in the matter gives lukewarm support to either side. Even Sambamurty has openly joined hands with him. It is very strange. I do not know what resolution if any has been passed by the Andhra Provincial Congress

Committee. A successful revolt is no revolt and if so it is always justified. Rajaji, I think counts on having a majority on his side. I do not know what is the exact position over there.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,

Vallabhbhai Patel

48. *Al-Hila'l*, 24 May 1942, in Support of the Rajaji Resolution
Home Department Special File No. 1018-I, MSA.

Under the caption 'The United National Front', *Al-Hila'l* writes: Since various communities are residing in India, a sort of non confidence and a feeling of animosity have been prevailing among them. But no body can deny the fact that all the communities of India, whether they be Muslim, Parsi, Sikh or Christian, are Indians and are in duty bound to get united for resisting the enemy for the sake of their sacred motherland. We are extremely sorry to see that we are not getting united although we know the nature of the danger facing our country and the causes of the various defeats. Even as regards defence measure every community has its own separate programme seeing which every patriot becomes despondent and shocked. Commonsense and patriotism demand that the resolution of C.R. ought to have received enthusiastic support. But India's misfortune has still its sway and hence his resolution was ridiculed and the Congress, influenced by the Mahasabhaitees, rejected this useful resolution. We were very much pleased to see that the Communist Members of the Congress were at the forefront in supporting the resolution of Rajaji. We are sure that the voice of truth and justice raised by Rajaji will not fail to vindicate itself and the day will come when the majority in the country will have to share the views of Rajaji.

49. M.K. Gandhi on C. Rajagopalachari, Sevagram, 24 May 1942
Harijan, 31 May 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, pp. 142-3.

There is no doubt that Rajaji is handling a cause which has isolated him from his colleagues. But his worst enemy will not accuse him of any selfish motive behind the extraordinary energy with which he has thrown himself into the controversy of which he is the author. It reflects the greatest credit on him. He is entitled to a respectful hearing. His motive is lofty. It is a noble thing to strive for Hindu-Muslim unity, equally noble to strive to ward off the Japanese invasion. In his opinion the two are intertwined.

Hooliganism is no answer to his argument. The disturbances at his meetings are a sign of great intolerance. Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or having listened make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst with the limits that nature has put upon our understanding we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it, if there is any. I plead therefore with all who are disturbing Rajaji's meetings not to do so but to give him a patient and respectful hearing to which he is entitled.

The reader knows that I hold Rajaji to be in the wrong. He is creating a false atmosphere. He does not believe in Pakistan nor do the nationalist Muslims and others who concede the right of separation or secession. They and Rajaji say that that is the way to wean the Muslim League from the demand for separation. I am surprised that many Muslims rejoice over a concession of doubtful value. I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it. It should be enough to state the proposition that nothing can prevent the Muslim League from having it if the Muslims really want it. They will take it by the vote or the sword unless they will submit to arbitration. But all this can only happen when the British Power is entirely withdrawn and the Japanese menace has abated. Till then there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan or any other 'stan'. It is today Englishstan and may be tomorrow Japanistan, if we do not take care. If all who consider India to be their home now and for ever will pull their full weight to deliver it from the present and the impending peril, and when both the perils are finally removed, it will be time to talk of Pakistan and other 'stans' and to come to an amicable decision or fight. No third party will or should decide our fate. It should be reason or the sword. Rajaji's method leads us to the blind alley unless his admirable and patriotic persistence opens a way unknown to him or any of us. Whatever the fate of different opinions, my plea is for mutual toleration and respect.

50. Statement of the Gugai National Youth League, 27 May 1942,
Regarding C. Rajagopalachari: 'Rajaji Should Resign All Posts'
AICC Papers, F. No. G-19 Part 5/1942, NMML.

To

The All India Congress Committee

1. This meeting whole-heartedly supports the resolutions arrived by the A.I.C.C.
2. This meeting is of the opinion that Rajaji's present move is detrimental to the interests and the defence of the country.
3. Besides condemning the propaganda [*sid*] that is now being carried on by Rajaji against the decision of the Congress, this meeting requests the workind [*sid*] committee, to bestow their serious attention to this matter, to ask Rajaji to resign all the posts that he holds in the Congress and to take any further disciplinary action that may be necessary.
4. The above resolutions were passed unanimously at a public meeting that was conducted by Gugai National Youth League in Bharatha Matha Free Reading Room, at 8-30 P.M. on Sunday the 24, inst. It was decided to send the above resolutions to the persons concerned.

From

M. Jagadeesan,
Secretary

The Gugai National Youth League
Narsingapuram Street,
GUGAI, SALEM



51. C. Rajagopalachari's Speech in Calicut on Need for United Front against Japanese Aggression

The Bombay Chronicle, 27 May 1942.

Calicut, May 25

'The Congress and the League must come together and see that the Japanese menace to India was ended; for if the Japanese took possession of India, neither the Congress nor the League would have any future', said Mr. C. Rajagopalachari addressing a meeting here on the present political situation and the need for Hindu-Muslim understanding.

.... The hurry which he was in to get the Congress and the League together was entirely due to the threat of the Japanese aggression. He would not have been presumptuous enough to place his solution before the Congress if he did not feel the hurry and the emergency of the occasion.

Proceeding, he said: 'If we wanted to fight and die for this country in the manner in which unarmed and intimidated people have to do, we should at least feel that we are Sovereigns of this country. Every individual should feel the same pride, fervour and ownership of this country. That was the reason, why he wanted that the majority in a particular area should have a right to be Sovereigns of that area, if they so choose; it was only then that they would feel there was something to die for.'

.... Concluding, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari said that the world was now divided ideologically into two camps, and it was impossible for India to remain neutral. It was absolutely essential that we must participate in this war. To-day it was a question of defence of India. That was the reason why the Congress sat with Sir Stafford Cripps and examined his proposals. We must defend India. The Congress and the League must come together. The League and the Muslim would be ruined, and the Congress and India would be ruined, if the two organizations did not come together. He had not lost sight of the wrongs Britain had done India. He did not wish to recall other things. But it was one thing to remember these things, and quite another to let that memory confuse our understanding of the present situation....

52. S. Satyamurti to M.K. Gandhi about Need for Drastic Action against C. Rajagopalachari's, 28 May 1942

Correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

My dear Mahatmaji,

.... Rajaji goes on arguing still, though vanquished. Drastic action must be taken against him. He has no right to carry on this propaganda against the Congress in these critical times. At any rate, he must resign the leadership of the Madras Legislature Congress Party, unless he persuades the majority of the Party to rebel. He will not succeed. He knows it, that is why he has not yet summoned a meeting of the Party. He must be made to. If you agree, I suggest you advise the Congress Parliamentary Committee and the Working Committee to act promptly and effectively.

I was present at the last meeting of the Working Committee. I know the differences between the Sardar and Rajen Babu on the one hand and the Maulan Saheb and Pandit Jawahar Lal

on the other. They are fundamental, but I respectfully suggest, that Congress unity is more fundamental. You and the Maulana can bring about that unity. A divided Congress to-day will be a national tragedy....

Yours very sincerely,

S. Satyamurti

53. P. Subbarayan to His Wife, 23 May 1942, about Opposition to
C. Rajagopalachari

CID Madras, 28 May 1942, GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

Dr. Subbarayan, Congress ex-Minister of Madras, in a letter dated May 23rd to his wife makes the following comments:

‘The opposition to Rajaji seems to be growing everywhere.... I see that there has been opposition at Tuticorin as well. He seems to be having the meetings as in Trichinopoly, Tanjore and Madura, but there is opposition and you know how a few people can make a nuisance of themselves. But the opposition is there. Prakasam, I see, is carrying on a campaign in Andhra and has had a reception everywhere.... The time factor is against him (Rajagopalachariar) and if he has to do anything he must do it quickly.... Yes, Jawaharlal has declared himself openly against Rajaji’s move and I am afraid he will go on in the way he has done unless Gandhiji steps in which is not likely now. I see the “Hindu” has a note that he (Nehru) is not touring Madras and he said so to a friend in Madras. Is that information given by you? That is really what Rajaji wanted.’

54. Letter from R.S. Ruiker, President, All India Forward Bloc, to
Acharya Kripalani, 28 May 1942, Asking Why No Disciplinary
Action Is Being Taken against C. Rajagopalachari, as Was Taken
against Subhas Chandra Bose

AICC Papers, F. No. G-35/1942, NMML.

Dear Friend,

I have to draw your attention to the fact that Shriyut Rajagopalachariar is carrying Anti-Congress activities, which run counter to the resolutions of the Allahabad A.I.C.C. and cut at the very root of our fundamental national demand of indivisibility and unity of India.

You know that the present Working Committee of the A.I.C.C. including Mr. Rajagopalacharya was the first to take disciplinary action against Subhas Chandra Bose and several leading Leftists for having participated in the Public meetings of 9th of July 1940, though the meetings were only intended to bring pressure on the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee of the Congress, to adopt a Left-wing programme.

I am, however, surprised to find that no action is being taken by the Working Committee or the President of the Indian National Congress against Mr. Rajagopalachariar and others of his type who are openly carrying on propaganda against the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee’s decisions.

At Nagpur also, the Local Leading Congressmen, Mr. Dindayal Gupta, President, Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee and Gavande Secretary of the Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee have openly associated themselves with the organizers of the Anti-Fascist Conference like Dr. Ashrof and the Local Communist, where resolutions were passed openly supporting help to present War. As far as I know the Local Congress Leaders had not even the courage to put the Congress view point in the meeting.

If the present Working Committee including the present President who took disciplinary action against Desh Gaurao Subhash Chandra Bose, fails to take disciplinary action against Mr. Rajagopalacharya and the Local Congressmen, all that I can say is, that the President of the Indian National Congress and the present Working Committee has not the courage of its conviction and that Mr. Rajagopalacharya has the tacit approval of the Working Committee and that the Working Committee and its President talk of discipline and take action under the precious plea, when it has to oppose the growing Left-Wing; but is a consenting party, when the revolt is on the side of the Rightist in the Congress, as is the case of Mr. Rajagopalacharya today.

Kindly reply and let me know what action you are pleased to take on this latter.

Yours Truly,

R.S. Ruiker

President,

All India Forward Bloc

55. Maulana Azad to S. Satyamurti, 29 May 1942: 'Rajaji Has Little Support'

K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 363-5.

My dear Satyamurti,

I am in receipt of your letter of 24th May 1942. You are simply looking at one side of the picture only, please look at the other also.

Rajaji began his movement with a group of Assembly Party members. He thought that even if he would not be able to get a majority in the AICC meeting, he would at least be able to get an effective division. And then, he might be able to lead a new party, just like the Swaraj Party of the past. A few Communists had misled him into believing that he could carry a good number of AICC members with him. I wanted to disillusion him on the point, but he did not appreciate my argument. However, I gave him a chance to bring his resolutions and see the result. The result is quite obvious. With the exception of the ten members whom he had brought along with him, he found only five Communist members of the Committee who could raise their hands for him. There was no division in the Committee.

Probably he also thought that on account of personal relations I would treat the matter leniently, and would take no action against him, but he was mistaken. I forced him to resign. It should be borne in mind that our Working Committee works like a Cabinet. If an action be necessary against a member, he cannot be dismissed. The utmost which can be done in such cases is to demand a resignation from him, and then accept it.

The result of this situation was that all the castles which he and his followers had built in the air fell to the ground within three hours. He could not make any impression on the Committee.

He could not win any important member in his favour. No one gave it any importance. All concurred that a wrong resolution was put before the house, which should be thrown out.

Mr. Amery and Linlithgow had great hopes about a division in the Congress. But they were disappointed in finding that no one could shake the Congress from its position.

If I visit Madras at this time or Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is sent there, it would all of a sudden give a different colour to the affair. People would think that Rajaji's opposition is so important that men of other provinces are hastening towards Madras in order to neutralize his efforts. This would affect the prestige of the Congress adversely, and will give a fresh lease of life to a dead and unimportant affair.

Pandit Jawaharlal had an idea of visiting Madras long before the affair of Rajaji. Like Bengal and Assam, the danger of Japanese aggression was imminent there, and people were panicky. But in the meanwhile the affair of Rajaji cropped up, and he has postponed his visit for the present, so that his visit might not be misinterpreted.

I would advise you, and all Madras friends, not to invite anyone from outside. It is not only unnecessary but it is detrimental to your interest. The only correct method is to have confidence in your own selves and give correct lead to the public. I see no reason why there should be any difficulty in your way, provided you are ready to work steadily.

.... You should give due emphasis to the fact, that during the present critical stage the country is passing through, how detrimental the attitude of Rajaji is to the cause which he claims to uphold.

So far as my attitude to Rajaji's activities against the Congress decisions is concerned, I may assure you that I can never tolerate anything against the Congress discipline. You have already known it from your experience of the last three years. Rajaji is no more in the Working Committee, but he is still a member of the Assembly Party, every member of which has taken a pledge to abide by the decisions of the Congress. Moreover, he is a member of AICC also. Under these circumstances he cannot do any propaganda against the Congress decisions among the public. I cannot ignore his activities. I will do what is my duty to do. It is, however, obvious that whatever action can be taken must follow the usual procedure.

Yours sincerely

Abul Kalam Azad

56. J.B. Kripalani's Circular to PCCs regarding C. Rajagopalachari

The Bombay Chronicle, 31 May 1942.

Calicut, May 30.

A circular from the General Secretary, A.I.C.C. has been received by the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee office¹ pointing out that Mr. Rajagopalachari's helpers and supporters must rid themselves of responsible positions in the Congress, if they wish to freely and wholeheartedly support him.

The circular reads: 'Mr. Rajagopalachari's resolution on what is popularly called Pakistan was defeated by an overwhelming majority in the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Allahabad. He has since been carrying on propaganda to educate the public in favour of his ideas. The Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. decided that the ideas and policies advocated by Mr. Rajagopalachari and such Congressmen as think with him in this matter are against the

present policy of the Congress. Mr. Rajagopalachari wanted freedom to propagate his view. He therefore considered it necessary to rid himself of the handicap of office. He resigned from the Working Committee. The Congress Committees have to carry out the policy of the Congress. These Committees, therefore, cannot organize meetings for Rajaji's propaganda, or help it in any way. The same applies also to the Office-bearers and Members of different executives.

Mr. Rajagopalachari will be the last person to appreciate action contrary to the standard that he has himself set in this controversy. As he has achieved his freedom of action by resignation from a responsible position, so must his helpers and supporters do likewise and rid themselves of responsible positions in the Congress to freely and wholeheartedly support Rajaji.

Action contrary to this will be against Congress discipline, and as such will be detrimental to the best interests of the organization and the country which the organization seeks to serve. In democracy, each party has the right to propagate his views freedom of expression is of the essence of democracy. But it is no part of democracy that those whose job is to carry out policies decided upon after free discussion by a majority vote in authoritative and representative assemblies should participate also in propagating and helping to propagate opinions contrary to such policies.

You will therefore, please warn committees subordinate to your P.C.C. and members of Executives and Office-Bearers to refrain from participating and helping Mr. Rajagopalachari's new propaganda carried out under any name. Be it that of opposition to the invader. This does not apply to attendance at meetings. But it includes organization of meetings, receptions or spending of Congress funds in connection with Rajaji's present tour programme or that of those who are engaged in the same object. These instructions have been necessitated by the complaints and enquiries we have received.

¹ This circular was sent to the Tamil Nadu and Andhra PCCs as well.

57. C. Rajagopalachari's Reply to the General Secretary's Circular

The Bombay Chronicle, 1 June 1942

Madras, May 31

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari has issued the following statement:-

'Sri J.B. Kripalani, General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee has sent me a copy of the circular letter he has issued to the Provincial Congress Committees in respect of my propaganda in support of the resolution I moved in the A.I.C.C. at Allahabad. It has found its way to the press. I am very grateful for the admission in the General Secretary's circular that I am free to give expression to my views and that my action is in pursuance of the principle that in democracy every party has the right to propagate its views. I may say that I had taken care myself seeing the General Secretary's circular letter that my meetings should not be organized by the Congress Executives and that expenditure should not be incurred from Congress funds.

'I am, however, unable to appreciate the other position taken up by the General Secretary's letter. The Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. have not decided on action or propaganda contrary to the idea and policy advocated by me in my resolution described as "the Pakistan resolution." I should be greatly surprised and grieved if it was the intention positively to do propaganda on the basis of Sri Jagat Narain's resolution. The position taken up in the main resolution confirming the Delhi Working Committee's resolution on the Cripps' negotiations

is contrary to this, but apart from it, I cannot believe it was intended to do propaganda for “Akhand Hindustan” under Congress auspices.

‘As I am of this opinion, I am unable to see why anyone who feels sincerely that I am right should give up his elective place in committees unless he himself chooses to do so for the sake of greater freedom. Be that as it may, I am very grateful that the General Secretary leaves no doubt as to the main question, namely, that apart from those holding executive office it is certainly open to Congressmen to hold my views and propagate them. I am very grateful for this because there is so much loose and unauthorized talk about disciplinary action which leaves the impression that honest opinion on one of the most serious problems of our national politics should be suppressed by authority and in the name of discipline. Such talk will deal a more serious blow to the prestige and strength of the Congress than any concession we may make to the League.’...

58. Statement Issued by J.B. Kripalani, General Secretary, AICC,
in Connection with C. Rajagopalachari’s Criticism of the AICC
Circular to PCCs in the South

AICC Papers, F. No. G-35/1942, NMML.

Shri Rajagopalachari has commented upon my circular issued to the P.C.C.s of the Southern Presidency. The circular while conceding the right of free speech, warns office-holders and members of Committees, against participation in Rajaji’s present propaganda which runs counter to the A.I.C.C. decision. Rajaji while welcoming the recognition of the right of free expression of opinion questions the propriety of prohibition office-holders from participating in his propaganda. His contention is that as office-bearers are not obliged by the A.I.C.C. resolution to propagate the idea of a united India, they should not be prohibited from participating in the Pakistan propaganda. This is strange logic. When Rajaji was the Premier I wonder if he would have accepted such arguments advanced by those holding executive offices. If I remember aright he did not want primary teachers in schools to enroll themselves as Congress members. In their case there was no question of propaganda. But it is useless to remind Rajaji of his past opinions and actions. He is a quick-change artist and has arguments similes and parables to justify any position Rajaji is happy that the A.I.C.C. circular recognizes the right of free expression of opinion. The circular was issued for the guidance of Congressmen. It was not a dissertation on freedom of speech. It is a truism to say that freedom of speech is of the essence of democracy. But this is a general and abstract proposition. Every right has a corresponding duty. Even under democracy freedom of speech is regulated by good sense, convention and law. A person has to express his opinion with due care, caution and sense of responsibility, high motives notwithstanding [*sic*]. It is not merely what is said but how and where it is said that limits the right of free speech. The limitations apply to private and public men alike. They apply with greater force to responsible leaders and in organizations run on voluntary basis.

A politician or a party has a right to propagate his or its views even though such views be against majority decisions. But if minorities were constantly engaged in converting their opponents democracy instead of being a form of government would degenerate into a debating society. There will be little possibility of carrying out a policy decided upon. If minorities have rights they have duties and responsibilities too. One of the duties of a minority is to allow the

majority time and opportunity to carry out its policy in action. All criticism must be regulated by this consideration ...

Also every minority must realize that it, in its turn, will be in charge of affairs. It would then require all the tolerance and good will of the opposition in carrying out its policies. Oppositions must wait and if need be allow people to learn by experience.... Gandhiji has often been defeated in the A.I.C.C. What does he do? He carries on silent propaganda and abides his time even though the majorities against him have been narrow. When Rajaji had a majority in favour of a national Government at Poona, Gandhiji, if he had wished, could have converted his minority into a majority in no time. So also after Bardoli the narrow and doubtful majority against him could have been converted in a minority if he had put a fraction of Rajaji's energy and vehemence. It is not that Gandhiji feels for his policies less than Rajaji. Like Rajaji he is fanatically convinced that he is right. Yet like a true democrat that he is, he allows the opposition to triumph over him and sometimes even helps in its triumph. Why? Because he wants people to learn by experience and does not want to rouse anger and passion. What did Rajaji's colleagues in the Working Committee do when they differ from him? They accepted the suggestion of their colleagues to continue in the Working Committee as their resignation might have hampered the majority in carrying out their policy. They felt for their proposition as much as Rajaji feels for his today. But they showed no intransigence. The Congress President paid them a public tribute that in spite of their views they were helpful to the Committee during the period of Cripps negotiations. They exercised commendable restraint (*sanyam*). The courtesy that they showed to Rajaji they naturally expect from him now that he happens to be in a hopeless minority. Instead one is pained to find him making reckless allegations which rouse opposition and passion and the truth of which his erstwhile colleagues are constrained to question. This is not the way for an opposition to work in a democracy. The plea of free speech cannot justify political intransigence.

59. S. Satyamurti to M.K. Gandhi, 2 June 1942: C. Rajagopalachari Is Trying to Weaken and Destroy the Congress

Correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

My dear Mahatmaji,

You will have received my last letter. I have read your latest article on Rajaji's propaganda. I agree with almost every word of what you say in that article. But there are two words there which disturb me. You describe Rajaji's persistence as 'admirable and patriotic.' I demur. What is there admirable or patriotic, in seeking and getting the help of anti-Congress elements (e.g.) the Justice Party, the Muslim League, the Friends of the Soviet Union whose only concern is Russia, students and labourers inspired by Sri M.N. Roy and his ilk and others, with a view to 'convert' the Congress? I have followed his propaganda closely and I am convinced that his attempt is not to convert the Congress so much as to weaken and destroy if possible its influence on the people. I am quoting from his own speeches. 'The greatest danger to the Congress is its tendency to become secret and authoritarian.' 'The 120 Members of the A.I.C.C. who voted against him did not think for themselves.' 'Congress who differ from him are not serious about resisting the Japanese menace.' 'The congress has done nothing all these years to achieve Congress-Muslim unity.' 'Congressmen who differ from him do so because

they are no serious about the freedom of the country.' 'You should forget the Congress as an organization and think of the people.'

Again, what is there patriotic in his persistence in a propaganda which merely supplies arguments to Col. Amery, Sir S. Cripps, Mr. Jinnah and other enemies of India's integrity and freedom? He is only repeating what they have been saying all these years.

I shouldn't have bothered you with this letter but for the fact that these two words may encourage him to go on and encourage others to follow him. What, do you think, will be the position of the Congress if leading Congressmen start this kind of propaganda? I have ventured to share these thoughts with you in the full confidence that they will receive due attention at your hands....

With kind regards,
Yours very sincerely,
S. Satyamurti

60. C. Rajagopalachari on M.K. Gandhi's Position and His Own
The Bombay Chronicle, 2 June 1942.

Greater the Difference the More We Agree
'C.R.' on 'Chalk-Cheese Difference' with Mahatma

Madras, June 1

'Gandhiji has suggested in his latest "*Harijan*" article that it should be enough to state the proposition that nothing can prevent the Muslim League from having it if the Muslims really want it. They will take it by the vote or the sword unless they will submit to arbitration'. There is no real difference between this position and what I entreat the Congress to accept. It is not chalk and cheese but six of one and half a dozen of the other, said Mr. Rajagopalachariar in an exclusive interview to the United Press on Gandhiji's latest article in the '*Harijan*' on his move....

'In all sincerity I believe that the Muslims in India must be made to feel that where they are in a majority and they feel they are self-sufficient and insist on it they have the right to, and will have a sovereign rule in that area. It is only thus that we can evolve a co-operative patriotism of highest order in India, not by insisting on slogans or driving our differences to the edge of disaster.'

—United Press

61. Reply from M.K. Gandhi to S. Satyamurti, 6 June 1942:
'You Cannot Deny Rajaji's Patriotism'

Correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

What you say is right, but you cannot deny his patriotism because he errs grievously. All I do by using those adjectives to free him of an unworthy motive or ambition....

Yrs,
M.K. Gandhi

62. M.K. Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari: What Makes Rajagopalachari's Plan Unnatural

Editorial, *The Tribune*, 9 June 1942.

While we entirely agree with Mahatma Gandhi that the political gulf between him and Mr. Rajagopalachariar is very real and that it cannot possibly be bridged by any make-believe, we have no doubt in our mind that he is wholly mistaken as regards the true nature of this gulf. According to him the difference between them consists in Mr. Rajagopalachari's belief in resisting the threatened Japanese attack with British aid. No one in India to-day, who believes in resisting the threatened Japanese attack effectively, can possibly believe in it except through complete and whole-hearted co-operation between the British Government and the Indian people. If Mr. Rajagopalachariar, therefore, believes in resisting the threatened Japanese attack with British aid, so far from there being anything unnatural in his plan, it is the most natural thing in the world. Mahatmaji himself has always believed in this method. On no other basis can one either understand or appreciate his repeated appeals to the British to make it possible for India to render her full and whole-hearted co-operation to them. The difference between him and Mr. Rajagopalachariar has always seemed to us to lie in this that while Mr. Rajagopalachariar believes in India's active and armed co-operation with Britain he himself believes only in her moral and non-violent co-operation. And need we say that in this matter Mr. Rajagopalachariar and not the Mahatma has the support of the overwhelming majority of his politically minded countrymen, who, however much some of them may believe in non-violence in an ultimate sense and for ultimate purposes, do not consider it an efficacious method in the present world conditions, especially in international affairs, for dealing with armed aggression.

Nor is there any real difference between Mahatmaji and Mr. Rajagopalachariar regarding India's goal of independence. Neither has ever believed in any other goal if by independence is meant the fullest measure of freedom in internal and external affairs. Here the only difference between the two eminent leaders is that while Mahatmaji, who has hitherto based all his plans for fighting Britain on her supposed unwillingness or inability to part with her irresponsible power or authority in India, is in the present case making an appeal to Britain to withdraw voluntarily and completely from India merely for the asking, Mr. Rajagopalachariar seeks to attain the same end by so increasing India's strength and efficiency during the war, though with British aid, as to make it impossible for Britain or any other Power, to treat India as a subject country after the war. Had Mr. Rajagopalachariar's plan been calculated to attain his end we for our part would have had no hesitation in saying that in this matter also the advantage lay wholly on his side. The Mahatma's plan appears to us to be both inconsistent and impracticable. There is not the smallest chance of the British voluntarily withdrawing from India at this state, and if unhappily the fortunes of the war should lead them to withdraw from India in the present crisis of India's fate and theirs, it would affect the interests of India herself as vitally and adversely as it would affect Britain's world-position. What political India does want is not merely that the British should withdraw from India as rulers, but that they should do so in conditions and circumstances when India would be able effectively to assume the supreme control of her own affairs. Mahatmaji with all his political shrewdness seems to imagine that for India to have real and effective independence all that is necessary is for the British to withdraw from India. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is the greatest possible difference from this point of view between securing the withdrawal of British Power

from India by India's own strength, and inducing Britain to withdraw from India by an appeal to her magnanimity and better judgment.

What is wrong about Mr. Rajagopalachariar's plan is not his attempt to resist Japanese aggression with British aid, the only way in which it is open to India to resist it in the present conditions, but in his attempt to establish a national Government in India to take over political power from the British by means of a pact between the Congress, which stands and has always stood for India's unity and political integrity, and the Muslim League, which avowedly stands for India's division into two or more independent and sovereign States of medieval type. It is here that his plan is as unnatural as it is divorced from reality. But is the Mahatma's own plan of building and maintaining an independent and sovereign State in India by completely non-violent means either more natural or more realistic? As regards communal unity, had Mr. Rajagopalachariar made Hindu-Muslim unity, which all of us want and a Congress-league pact based on the recognition of the Muslim League's demand for a vivisection of India, is fundamental. It is not the difference between half a dozen and six as Mr. Rajagopalachariar said the other day but between chalk and cheese as the Mahatma himself described it not long ago.

63. Vallabhbhai Patel to C. Rajagopalachari, 7 June 1942, Asking Him to Call a Meeting of the Party and See whether the Members Agree with His Views

C. Rajagopalachari Papers, Roll No. 2, Microfilm, NMML.

My dear Rajaji,

You are not in a mood to listen to any friendly advice and so I will not attempt to provoke you.

You have forced Bapu to contradict you. As usual he has been very gentle. You have forced Maulana to contradict you. You must have noticed that he is very bitter. Other friends have entered into controversy with you. I can only say that you have no idea of the feeling of resentment created all over.

I suggest that you should now call a meeting of your Party and see whether they are in agreement with your views or not and whether they approve or disapprove of your campaigns.

.... The resolution that you had brought at Allahabad was said to be a snatch vote passed in a poorly attended meeting called hurriedly without proper notice, but now after all this education and public opinion you can call a proper meeting and have confirmation of your position.

Mr. Satyamurti has raised a point that the members of the Legislatures are bound by the pledge to carry out the policy and program of the Congress and I think he is right. Don't you think so also?

Hope you are keeping fit,
Yours sincerely,

Vallabhbhai



64. C. Rajagopalachari to M.K. Gandhi about S. Satyamurti's Letters,
10 June 1942

Correspondence with S. Satyamurti, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection),
Microfilm, NMML.

My dear Bapu,

I am returning Satyamurti's letters as they should be among your permanent papers.

These letters undoubtedly make me angry. But I do not regret whatever charity I was capable of and showed towards this man. These fresh experiences in the possible variations of human character are painful. I am not a very good man, but I dislike this experience. He is working hard to save you from me. You can guess what he must be doing or wishing to do here.

Thank you for reiterating to him your belief in my patriotism! What I claim is that it is truer, even in an objective sense, than you would allow! I see no plan of any value in the Congress time table. What I say would, if you only accepted it, produce immediate fruit and strength to the nation. But I cannot make you accept it!

Love,

Raja

65. C. Rajagopalachari Suggests Meeting between Jawaharlal Nehru and
M.A. Jinnah

The Bombay Chronicle, 16 June 1942.

Madura, June 15

Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah should come together and save the nation, declared Mr. C. Rajagopalachari replying to the welcome address from Madura District Board to-day.

.... Gandhiji's position is out of question. Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah should come together and save the nation. Incitement of organizational wrath against me is not action. It is not an alternative programme. I do not care what happens to me. It is enough if Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah bestir themselves and achieve the one thing that is now needed in this crisis and which will save the country and land the nation on the shore of stable honour and freedom.

66. Vallabhbhai Patel to C. Rajagopalachari, 20 June 1942, about
K. Santanam's Ridicule of the Congress Programme

Sardar Patel Papers, File No. Lot 1/39/1/3: Patel's Correspondence, 1935-45, Sardar Patel National Museum, Ahmedabad.

My dear Rajaji,

I got your letter of the 16th instant yesterday afternoon, when I heard that you were on your way to Sevagram.

I am not at all well, but I wish I had not lived to see this day when circumstances combined to place us in such opposite camps. Every sentence that you suffer in public hurts us like a stab in the heart. I wonder what is in store for us. Look at Santanam's latest. He ridicules

non-violence constructive program and everything that we stood for from so many years in a manner in which even our worst enemy has not done. And as for Bapu's latest slogan ... contempt is extremely violent. I can understand difference of opinion, but can we descend to this level! After all he reflects your opinions and his loyalty to you has made him so frenetic as to forget ordinary limits of decency.

Don't you realize that even from your point of view the course you have adopted is harmful and is likely to produce contrary results? I won't say more.

Hope you are keeping fit,
Yours sincerely

Vallabhbhai

67. B.S. Moonje on C. Rajagopalachari in a Speech at the Third
Provincial Hindu Sabha Conference at Coimbatore, 20 June 1942

B.S. Moonje Papers, Speeches and Writings, S. No. 55, NMML.

.... We are meeting under most tragic and humiliating circumstances. It is tragic because there is a fundamental change in the attitude of the British Government towards India and its future....

.... The British Statesmen up till quite recently have been applauding loudly what they described as their unique achievement in bringing about complete unity of India, thereby throwing out insinuations that from ages past India was never a Nation but a mere conglomeration of small mutually fighting principalities. But now they find that the All India Congress and the All India Hindu Mahasabha have now grown into powerful political organizations and that both these organizations are almost entirely of the Hindus which form the majority community in India. They now fear that under the system of democracy they will have to surrender political power to these organizations. They are, therefore, throwing cold water on the boastings of their own statesmen over their achievement of political unity and solidarity of entire India. Mr. Amery now says, 'The unity which we have given to India, the Unity of law, of administrative procedure, of economical and transport policy, is an achievement of which we have every right to be proud. But we would sooner see India divided and free than keep her various elements for ever against each other under a sense of impotent frustration,' so that 'the distinctive culture and way of life of the Moslems may not be at the mercy of the permanent Hindu Majority'.

.... It is this fact of the fundamental change in the British attitude towards India that I wish to emphasize and impress on the Hindus of India. It will begin to work out its destiny after the war. The Hindus must take their warning in time.

Having first described the tragic nature of the circumstances, I would now speak a few words as to how and why the Hindus feel humiliated. Our friend, Mr. Rajagopalachari is a Hindu and even a Brahmin. He is and has been carrying on an intensive and fanatical propaganda for influencing the Hindus to concede Pakistan to the Mussulmans and thus agree to the partition of India. After Pakistan will follow, as night follows the day, Bangistan, Hurstan, Christianstan, and so many other 'Stans' like them. Is it not Balkanisation of India? Is it not dethroning and degrading India from the high pedestal of a powerful and respected Nation to the insignificant position of a mere conglomeration of Principalities, feared and repeated by none and threatened and dominated by every powerful Nation? Who can say, it is not humiliating to the Hindus? Where practically all the Mussulmans, whether in the Congress or in the Muslim League or

whether nationalists or communalists, are speaking with one determined voice in favour of Pakistan and partition of India into various Sovereign States, is it not derogatory to the dignity and prestige of the Hindus that one occupying the eminent position in the community like Mr. Rajagopalachari should come out openly to support Pakistan and to preach against what is practically held unanimously by the entire Hindu Community in India as an harbinger of wreck [*sic*] and ruin. In fact, even his supporters admit that 'Mr. Rajagopalachari enjoys hardly any support in the rest of India except among Muslims.' Practically all his colleagues in the Congress including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and others are strongly opposed to him, though not equally determined to risk the displeasure of the Moslems by starting a counter propaganda. The irony of the situation, however, is that Mr. Rajagopalachari is maintaining that his only fault is that he is emphasizing what has been consistently and continuously preached by Mahatma Gandhi in the Congress and outside in respect of Hindu Muslim unity.

Here we, as outsiders, must clearly see and analyse, as third persons, what has been actually said by Mahatma Gandhi and what are its clear implications. Mahatma Gandhi says, 'If the vast majority of the Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise and if they want to partition on that basis, they must have the partition unless Hindus want to fight against such a division.' Mr. Rajagopalachari has been ignoring the most relevant and significant part of the last sentence, that is 'Unless Hindus want to fight against such a division.' Mr. Rajagopalachari and a few Hindus of his way of thinking may not have the heart to fight for the integrity and solidarity of India, but from the ^{*}experience he has been gaining in this propaganda tour of his, he must admit that the Hindus are determined to fight to the last drop of their blood to maintain the traditional, religious and cultural solidarity of India and Indian Empire, that is, Savabhoumatva and Ekrashtriyatva of our Vedic prayers of the entire country lying between the river Sindhu in the north and the sea in the south. Mahatma Gandhi's point in what he has said is that 'if the Mussulmans regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with Hindus and others' then they are aliens just like the Germans, Russians, Jews and Japanese and if they are aliens they must be dealt with as such and who else can deal with them in that way except the Hindus who own this land as their fatherland and Holy-land from the dawn of the Humanity and who form the majority community of about 30 to 32 crores? That is why Mahatma Gandhi sees before his mind's eye the prospect of a bloody civil war if the Hindus like Mr. Rajagopalachari and the Mussulmans were to continue and to insist on having their own way. It then really ceases to be an internal communal problem and assumes the tragic magnitude of one Nation fighting against the other for the possession of a country with fifth columnists to support them under the leadership of an eminent Hindu, Mr. Rajagopalachari. It bears the complete analogy of Japan or Germany trying to invade India. If Mr. Rajagopalachari is so terribly and rightly anxious to fight Japan, then why should he not be equally anxious to fight Mr. Jinnah and his Muslim League, if, as Mahatma Gandhi says, they regard themselves as aliens and entirely a separate Nation?...

.... Now I would like to deal with the whirl-wind propaganda of Mr. Rajagopalachari in favour of the Pakistan of the Muslim League. Mr. Rajagopalachari believes that Japan will invade India and conquer it and that the British Government will not be able to put up an efficient and successful defence. Thus, he argues, if Japan invades and conquers India, the British Government will go and with it all hopes and plans of non-violence and non-cooperation, Central and Provincial Legislatures and their Ministerships, National Government and Defence Minister and

everything that they were negotiating with Sir Stafford Cripps. In fact, he believes that if Japan succeeds, India will be made a slave much more than we are at present. He, therefore, wants to fight Japan and defend India; but he has not got confidence in him and in the Hindu community to which he belongs. He, therefore, wants to combine with the Mussulmans. Mussulmans will not unite with him unless their demand of Pakistan is accepted. Therefore Rajagopalachari readily accepts their demand of Pakistan and is terribly annoyed with the Congress for having rejected his proposals and, in its place, accepted Babu Jai Narainlal's proposals for rejecting Pakistan. He is so terribly annoyed with the Congress that he says 'he would fight the Congress just as he would fight the Japanese.' He may not aspire for the Prime-Ministership of whole of India in the Central Government, but he feels—and quite sincerely feels—that there can be no Prime Minister in Madras other than himself. But at the same time he also feels that he cannot be made the Prime Minister unless the Mussulmans of his Province support him. He further feels and honestly feels that, by being out of the Government, he cannot realize his dream which, in his own words, is as follows: 'If our Government were in office, we will be spread all over and every village will be alive with the spirit of defence. There can be a well organized militia throughout the country. Non-violent, non-cooperation with the Japanese will not do.... We must fight and it is very difficult without our own Government. I want a National Army for which I want a National Government and I want a National front to secure a National Government. National Government involves primarily a settlement with the Muslim League.' Such is in brief the real position of Mr. Rajagopalachari. In one word, because the Moslems are not by his side, and because he fears that the British will not be able to defeat Japan, he is overwhelmed with defeatism at the prospect of Japanese invasion.

Now let us analyse his position and see how far he is right and where is erring. The very first point that strikes me as peculiarly significant is—why Mr. Rajagopalachari, the Hindu, alone should be so terribly unnerved at the prospective Japanese invasion? Why should Mr. Jinnah, the Mussulman not be unnerved? On the other hand, he is perfectly calm, quiet and is maintaining his balance. If the danger is real, it should equally be a danger both to the Mussulman and to the Hindu. Because if, with the defeat and disappearance of the British the Independence will disappear, so also will be the case with Pakistan. Then why should Mr. Jinnah, who is so keen on Pakistan, should [sic] remain so indifferent?

Mr. Rajagopalachari believes that if the Madras Government had been in his hand, he would have raised a well organized militia throughout the Province. Saying is easier than actually doing it. Who would allow him to raise a militia? Is there a National militia in Sind, or in Punjab or in Bengal where the respective Provincial Governments are in the hands of the peoples of the respective Provinces?... Where will he get the rifles and cartridges? Will the Viceroy allow him, even if there will be a National Government in the Centre in collusion with the Muslim League? The National Government will not be of the kind on which the Congress is insisting; because Sir Stafford Cripps and the British War Cabinet have set their face against it with fanatic determination.... Thus the kind of National Government which might give power to Rajagopalachari to raise a National Militia is sheer [sic] impossibility....

Mr. Rajagopalachari wants to defend India against the Japanese invasion. Sir Stafford Cripps says that 'This defence is a paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government' and that 'The defence will not be in Indian hands even if all the parties want it.' If the defence is not entrusted to the National Government, even of that kind which Congress is insisting upon, then what part of the defence will be left to it and to Mr. Rajagopalachari?...

If such is the limited scope of Sir Stafford Cripps's proposals regarding what he designates as the National Government, a high sounding but meaningless name, then where is the chance for Mr. Rajagopalachari to create a national militia and to defend India from Japanese invasion? This is all moon-shine. Let him not deceive himself and deceive our poor ignorant masses: otherwise he will have first surrendered the sacred right of the Hindus and yet will not be able to realize his dream of a National Militia....

68. 'C.R.' Meets M.A. Jinnah

The Times of India, 25 June 1942.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, former Premier of Madras, who is now in Bombay, met Mr. M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, at the latter's residence at Malabar Hill on Wednesday. The conversation between the leaders, which lasted nearly an hour and a half, it is understood, related to Hindu-Muslim unity.

Mr. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Jinnah will meet again on Thursday to continue their talks.

69. Tar Thrown on 'C.R.' at Bombay Meeting: Talks with M.A. Jinnah

The Times of India, 26 June 1942.

A violent attack was made on Mr. C. Rajagopalachari on Thursday night on his first public appearance since his arrival in Bombay three days ago.

A large quantity of coal tar was thrown on his face as he entered Napoo Hall, Matunga, where the meeting had been arranged by the Girni Kamgar and Students' Unions. A free fight ensued between a number of persons who had come deliberately to break the meeting and 'Red' volunteers. Lathis were freely used and about ten persons were slightly injured.

All attempts to break the meeting, which were obviously well planned, however, failed miserably and Mr. Rajagopalachari, despite the rough treatment—his head, face and clothes completely smeared with tar—was unruffled. The meeting was largely attended and Mr. Rajagopalachari was frequently cheered during his speech which lasted over an hour. Mr. N.M. Joshi presided.

Mr. Rajagopalachari made a stirring speech stressing the need for action in the face of the Japanese menace, adding that they could not resist Japan if they sat mumbling some formula. He treated the attack on him lightheartedly, asking the organizers to treat the incident as a joke, and remarked that he would stick to his opinions, no matter how much coal tar was thrown at him.

In order to be able to resist Japan, he declared, they must make large sacrifices. Many Indians had gone out to give up their lives in resisting the Japanese. Many people called them mercenaries. But Mr. Rajagopalachari thought it was wrong to call them mercenaries. However, the sacrifice which he was going to ask them to make was not of their lives, but of their convictions. They could not carry all their convictions on their shoulders unco-ordinated.

Mr. Rajagopalachari was convinced that two divided freedoms were better than to be united in slavery....

.... Mr. Rajagopalachari said that it was utter nonsense to say that if they resisted Japan now, and thereby helped Britain, they would be lost and Britain would continue to hold them for all time. On the contrary, if they resisted Japan they would win their freedom. It was not

a small matter and he greatly deplored the present accursed atmosphere in which they lived. They had to do something which was wise in order to secure the first thing, namely, throw back our enemies. Mutual suspicion and small-mindedness had to be got over....

Talks with Mr. Jinnah

Mr. Rajagopalachari again met Mr. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, at the latter's residence on Thursday and carried on conversations for nearly five hours.

Both Mr. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Jinnah were most unwilling to disclose to the Press the nature of the conversations but it is learnt the talks have concluded.

Mr. Rajagopalachari will leave for Wardha to see Mr. Gandhi on Friday.

70. Letter from C. Rajagopalachari to M.K. Gandhi, 2 July 1942:
M.A. Jinnah Genuinely Desirous of Congress–League Settlement
Correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

My dear Bapu,

I have already given you an account of the conversations I had with Mr. Jinnah last week. I write this in order that you may have the matter in a more precise form. It is needless to say that Mr. Jinnah has not authorized me to put anything in writing on his behalf.

Mr. Jinnah appreciated the object of my visit viz. that though I had no authority for any kind of negotiation nor any message from any one to be conveyed to him, I went to him in my individual capacity to know from him first-hand whether the stand I took in regard to the solution of the Congress–League differences was one which in Mr. Jinnah's opinion could settle the problem and evoke a useful response from his side, and therefore I could legitimately press it on the Congress for acceptance.

As a result of the talks, I am satisfied that Mr. Jinnah is genuinely desirous of a Congress–League settlement and would welcome negotiations for that purpose. But I believe there is no useful purpose to be served by meeting him if the principle of the claim for separation of Muslim areas is not accepted.

I explained my proposal in precise terms to him viz., that the Congress should accede to the right of separate sovereignty to areas wherein the majority of the population are Muslims subject to the following:

- (1) The present provincial boundaries are not to be the basis, but contiguous districts wherein the population is a Muslim majority and to be marked out.
- (2) After the War is over, the wishes of the people of these areas are to be ascertained and given effect to in this regard.
- (3) The Congress does not by this acceptance of the right of separation give up the right of dissuading the people concerned against the separation, but definitely accepts it should the same be persisted in and the verdict is given by the inhabitants in favour of separation.
- (4) The voting should be of all the people in these areas and not only of the Muslims.

If this position of mine is accepted by Gandhiji, he will ask the League Working Committee to reconsider its own resolution on the subject adopted during the Cripps negotiations.

If a Congress–League settlement is reached on this basis, Mr. Jinnah and the League will join in a united demand for independence and elimination of all British authority after the war and for a provisional Government of India in the interim period along the lines taken up by the Congress.

As regards the States, I did not have any talks with him on the subject, but Mr. Jinnah is of opinion that the problem of the States had better not be taken up for solution now, as it would hold up everything.

I do not see that for the interim provisional Government of India, the problem of the states needs be solved. But I believe that Mr. Jinnah would not object, if other things are settled, to a general policy that we should both cooperate in the demand for Constitutional forms of government in States.

Mr. Jinnah is positive that after separation as contemplated by him both Indias should bind themselves to defend each other against all aggression from outside.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

71. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to C. Rajagopalachari, Asking Him to Obey Vallabhbhai Patel's Ruling, 5 July 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 274–5.

My dear C.R.,

Mahadev was telling me how sad you were over my obstinacy in not appreciating what was so plain to you. All I can say is that there is no want of will about me. But I am built that way. Once an idea possesses me I can't easily get rid of the possession. I suppose you are of the same build. Therefore there seems to be no escape but to suffer each other's limitations.

But the reason for writing this is different. Vallabhbhai came today. He is firmly of opinion that in carrying on your propaganda, you are breaking the written word. So long as you remain a member of the Assembly under the Congress ticket, which binds its members to carry out the policy from time to time laid down by the A.I.C.C., you are bound to carry it out. If that is so, it is your duty to resign the membership of the Assembly. You may not discuss at this stage the reasonableness or otherwise of the pledge. I want you to be above aboard. You should obey Vallabhbhai's ruling. The other members too feel likewise.

And in any case I have told you it will be most becoming for you to sever your connection with the Congress and then carry on your campaign with all the zeal and ability you are capable of.

Love,
Bapu

72. On the C. Rajagopalachari–M.A. Jinnah Talks
United Press of India, Jubbulpore, 6 July 1942.

Reports received in private circles here from Wardha regarding the outcome of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's talk with Mr. Jinnah reveal that Rajaji's four interviews with Mr. Jinnah lasting for over 14 hours did not succeed in cutting much ice. Mr. Jinnah, it is also gathered, pressed for the cancellation of the A.I.C.C. resolution against Pakistan.

73. Telegram from C. Rajagopalachari to M.K. Gandhi, Sevagram, Wardha, 8 July 1942, Resigning from Congress and Assembly Membership

Rajagopalachari Papers, Microfilm, NMML, Roll No. 2; also in Correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

Please give Maulanasahib this I resign hereby Congress am also resigning Assembly membership.

74. Show Cause Notice to C. Rajagopalachari from President of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee(TNCC)¹

The Bombay Chronicle, 10 July 1942.

Madras, July 9

The President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee has addressed a communication to Mr. C. Rajagopalachari asking him to show cause why the Tamil Nadu Congress Working Committee should not take disciplinary action against him.

The following is a free translation of the letter addressed by the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee to Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar:

‘Dear Sir—I am enclosing for attention a copy of the resolutions which the Tamil Nadu Congress Working Committee passed at Courtallam on June 29 and 30.

The propaganda that you have been carrying on after the A.I.C.C. meeting has taken the form of exhorting the general public that it is not proper to follow the lead of the Congress, instead of its being an effort to get the Congress decision modified.

You have been emphasizing in your speeches that the Congress resolutions amount merely to ‘doing nothing.’

You have stated that even in the existing situation the public should support the proposal for the establishment of a popular Government in Madras.

In one of your speeches you have said that it is foolish not to resist Japan on the ground that the British Government are not ready to part with power and so implied that the Congress resolutions have not shown the way to resistance to Japanese aggression.

You have stated that even if no changes are effected in the Centre, we will accept office in the Provinces.

You said that it is not proper to go on stressing the differences between us and Britain.

In one speech you have spoken so as to give the impression that those who do not accept your views not only do not seek to wrest power from the foreigner but also seek to deny it to a section of our own people.

You have stated that the Congress has not done anything for Hindu-Muslim unity; and in similar utterances you have spoken in a manner calculated to deflect the public from the path laid down by the Congress.

Your propaganda is being conducted solely for the purpose of inducing the people not to accept and act on the Congress resolutions.

Moreover, members of the Legislature elected on the Congress ticket are bound by their pledge given at the time of their candidature, to follow and act in accordance with the directions of the Congress Committee. While continuing to be a member of the legislature, it is improper for you to carry on propaganda counter to Congress resolutions.

Hence I request you to send in writing within 15 day your reasons why disciplinary action should not be taken against you by the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.'

¹ K. Kamaraja Nadar.

75. C. Rajagopalachari's Reply to the TNCC President's Letter

The Bombay Chronicle, 10 July 1942.

The following is the full text of Mr. Rajagopalachari's reply to the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee:

'I have your letter of 5th July. I repudiate the charge made therein. You begin and end your letter with the statement that the propaganda I have been doing after the last A.I.C.C. meeting is not an effort to get the Congress decisions altered but has a tendency to dissuade the public from following the Congress. This is by itself a mere inferential expression of opinion on your part. It is again a distinction without a difference and proceeds from a basic error of outlook. You ignore that the Congress is not merely a close party machine but is a democratic national organization. The fact that the Congress has been recently functioning as a party machine ought not to make you ignore its larger aspect as a national institution....

... the charge of breach of discipline based on expressions of opinion is baseless, unless indeed one is to be totally debarred from persuading Congressmen to alter their opinions once they are set down in the form of committee resolutions. No change in Congress policy would ever be possible if this exaggerated interpretation of loyalty and discipline be accepted.

My campaign is to bring about a realistic attitude on the part of the Congress in respect of the three issues of:

- (1) A Congress-League settlement,
- (2) The installation of a National Government for All-India as well as the substitution of popular forms of government in place of authoritative rule now prevailing in some provinces and
- (3) The co-ordination of the State and people in defending India against Axis aggression.

I do seek to convert the Congress from its present attitude. I have done this with all the care and caution that may be expected of one who has identified himself for over thirty years with the Congress and knows the value of discipline and organization as well as the need for liberty of thought and opinion in a national organisation.

You refer to the pledge of members elected on the Congress ticket to accept and act in accordance with Congress decisions. It is absurd to interpret the pledge as intended to cover anything other than the work in or connected with the legislature.

Your attempt to give a mandate to members of the legislature as to what they should do in the party meeting is most reprehensible. I note, however, that better counsel has prevailed and you have withdrawn from this attempt, step by step. I, however, must protest at the undue influence sought to be exercised by issuing notices calculated to produce fear of your disciplinary jurisdiction being invoked.

Notwithstanding the baselessness of your charges, I do not wish to wrangle with you. In order to be absolutely free to carry on my campaign for converting the Congress from the present policy, I have decided to resign my membership of the Congress and to tender my resignation of Assembly membership at the meeting of the party on the 15th July.

76. Letter from C. Rajagopalachari and Others to M.K. Gandhi,
18 July 1942, about the Congress Working Committee Wardha
Resolution of 14 July 1942

CWVG, Vol. 76, Appendix VII, pp. 454–5.

Dear Mahatmaji,

We have carefully read the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on July 14, which is to be placed before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. next month. In view of the far-reaching consequences of the adoption of this resolution, we feel it our duty, having worked with you since 1920, to place before you our considered views in this matter. While there can be no difference of view over India's demand for complete freedom from foreign domination, the idea of the withdrawal of Government being automatically replaced by another Government is altogether impossible. The State is not a mere superstructure, but is so intimately bound up with the functioning of every activity of the people that the withdrawal of the Government without a simultaneous replacement by another might involve a dissolution of the State and of society itself. It is unnatural for any Government to withdraw without transferring power to a successor by consent or without being forcibly replaced by another. The formation of a provisional government as well as the convening of the constituent assembly are possible only if the continuity of the State is assured.

We feel, therefore, that, however difficult of achievement the Hindu-Muslim settlement may be, while the British Government is here and functioning it is essential that, before a demand for withdrawal can be reasonably made, the major political organizations of this country, namely, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim league, should evolve a joint plan with regard to the provisional government which can take over power and preserve the continuity of the State. Even if we imagine that the British could ever under moral compulsion be made to withdraw unconditionally, we are convinced that the chaos that would follow under existing conditions would not permit within any reasonable time the formation of a provisional government such as you contemplate.

We consider it wrong to formulate a demand which, if complied with, must necessarily lead to anarchy or to frame a programme of widespread self-inflicted suffering based on the refusal of such a demand.

Your proposal that while the civil power may be withdrawn, the British and Allied forces may continue in India in anticipation of a treaty with a problematic provisional Indian government will only lead to the exercise of all governmental functions by the military forces. This will happen if only for their own safety and effective functioning. They are further likely to be urged towards this step by local chieftains and suffering people. This would be the reinstallation of the British Government in a worse form.

In spite of these objections we might have submitted to your proposal if only because of the fact that the British are not going to withdraw, and in actual operation the movement would amount to a nationwide protest against the existing Government and may be productive of a satisfactory settlement in due course. But the critical international situation in which India is directly involved makes it certain that the party to gain immediately by the movement will be Japan. If the movement could possibly displace the British Government, installing a national government capable of resisting Japanese aggression, it might be worth taking all risks attached

to it. But as this result is not even remotely probable, it will only produce more intense and large-scale repression and suffering which will facilitate Japanese invasion and occupation.

It is hardly likely that the authorities will allow the movement to proceed under central direction in an orderly and direct fashion. Even if we do not mind sporadic violence that may result from lack of proper control, there is another serious danger. When responsible leaders are removed and their guidance is no longer available the movement can easily be taken advantage of by the enemy and be converted into a fifth-column activity on his behalf.

Any movement started by you would have commanded our loyal participation, in spite of differences of opinion, if the movement did not involve such grave consequences as pointed out above. Our conviction is strong enough to make it our duty publicly to oppose the proposal on these grounds. But it may be thought at this stage that your move will operate as a protest with an international appeal and bring about a fresh approach towards a political settlement for India without actually plunging the country in direct action. In order that any step on our part may not lessen this chance we refrain from giving public expression to our opposition but send this letter to entreat you to desist from taking the steps you have adumbrated.

(Sd.) C. Rajagopalachari,
K. Santhanam,
S. Ramanathan,
Dr. T.S.S. Rajan

77. C. Rajagopalachari to Reginald Maxwell Asking for Release of More Communist Detenus, 6 July 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 7/15/42, NAI.

Dear Sir Reginald,

I was glad to see the Government of India making progress in the discharge of Communist detenus and prisoners and I must convey my sincere thanks to you. I am not unaware of the difficulties that were overcome, though I do not know anything definite.

I am very sorry to note, however, that a few important detenus like S.V. Ghate are still not released. I am quite certain that though they may be connected with labour organizations, they will not be a source of trouble. Rather I believe that their association with labour will be added strength to the movement for national defence. I should like you to hasten the cancellation of warrants against E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad and P. Sundarayya of Nellore and others of that kind. Their being underground prevents a lot of good work which may otherwise be done. Again, I wish to remind you that time is precious.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/

C. Rajagopalachari



78. C. Rajagopalachari to Reginald Maxwell, 23 July 1942, about the
Good Work Done by Communists in Malabar

GOI Home Political File No. 7/15/42, NAI.

Dear Sir Reginald,

Thank you for your kind letter of 18th July....

I had written to Sir Arthur Hope¹ again about E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad as well as about the removal of the ban on local peasant unions in Malabar. The Communists in Malabar have done better work than their conferences in other places and do not deserve to be under any kind of ban at the present moment when their presence and open work among the people would be most useful. I should like you to do something to see that all the provincial governments act quickly. At any rate, Communist members of the All India Congress Committee should not be absent from the meeting shortly to be held in Bombay by reasons of being detained in prison.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-

C. Rajagopalachari

¹ Governor of Madras.

79. C. Rajagopalachari to Reginald Maxwell, 1 August 1942, Asking for
Chitale to Be Released before the Bombay AICC Session

GOI Home Political File No. 7/15/42, NAI.

Dear Sir Reginald,

I have just returned from Wardha. I am not yet in a position to write precisely about S.V. Ghate in answer to your letter. Meanwhile may I request that Chitale, who is in Nasik Jail, and who is a member of the All India Congress Committee, may be released in time? He would be a source of strength to his Party [Communist Party] at the discussions on 7th August.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-

C. Rajagopalachari

80. C. Rajagopalachari to Sir Arthur Hope, Governor, Madras, 21 July
1942, about P. Sundarayya and E.M.S. Nambudiripad

Public (Confidential) Department 1942, GOM 2291, TNSA.

Dear Sir Arthur,

I have received a letter from Sir Reginald Maxwell in the course of which he writes:

‘3. As regards the other two persons whom you mention in your letter, one, whom you call P. Sundarayya of Nellore, must, I think, be the same as P. Sundarama Reddi against whom there is an outstanding warrant issued by the Central Government. If so, in accordance with the general policy we are prepared to cancel his warrant. The warrant against the other person

whom you mention was issued by the Madras Government who will no doubt deal with it in accordance with their working out of the general policy.'

The 'other person' referred to above is E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad of Malabar. This person is underground on account of a warrant issued against him by the Madras Government. He is the guide and philosopher of the Communists and sympathizers and peasant leaders in Malabar. During my tour in Malabar I was very much impressed by the work carried on by this group. In the face of considerable orthodox Congress opposition and other difficulties arising out of his imprisonment and disappearance of their leaders the peasantry and labour have been kept up in a fever of anti-Jap and anti-Fascist activity. This is continuing as may be seen from the copy of a letter to the Chief Secretary, which they have sent me, herein enclosed. I would very much appreciate early action in the direction requested in this letter, namely, that the ban on the Peasants Unions of Malabar might be removed to enable them to work openly and more effectively in the same direction as they have been now doing unofficially.

I feel strongly that the cancellation of the warrant against E.M. Sankaran Nambudiripad will be very helpful in this direction. I am certain he will do nothing to cause embarrassment to the defence operations in the country.

Yours Sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The enclosed letter from the Kerala Anti-Jap Propaganda Office to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, 17 July 1942

Sir,

This is to bring to your notice a great handicap which we experience in our anti-Jap campaigns, namely, the ban on the All-Malabar Peasants Union and its branches which the Govt. was pleased to order in April 1941.

You have probably received reports of the enthusiastic part which the peasants are taking to-day in the anti-Fascist, anti-Jap campaigns now going on in Malabar and South Canara. Innumerable meetings, conferences, Jathas and demonstrations are going on even in these days of heavy downpour of rains and in all these, the peasants and those of their leaders who are free are taking an active part. Two anti-Jap festivals—that at Calicut on May 31st and that at Parsanikadavu near Cannanore on June 7th—were so far the biggest anti-Jap demonstrations and in both the peasants stood shoulder to shoulder with other sections of the people in expressing their readiness to fight the Japs to death.

But you know that such spontaneous demonstration is quite inadequate in view of the gravity of the situation. Enthusiastic demonstrations alone won't be sufficient to fight the crafty and brutal foe. It is only solid organization and steady sustained work that will prepare the people for the firm resistance which is the need of the hour. It is exactly this organization and sustained work that is lacking today for the simple reason that the peasants—the most numerous element in the population of the district—have not got their own organization functioning because it is under ban.

We need not labour the point to any great length. We should however stress the following:

- a) The Govt.'s justification for the ban at the time of its imposition was that it is under the influence of the communists who were responsible for mob violence at Kayyur. That justification no longer holds good, because the Govt's policy towards the Communists has changed all over India. Comrade P.C. Joshi, the acknowledged leader of the Indian

Communists, is no more underground, but is directing the activities of his comrades all over India from his legal office in Bombay. Most of the student detenues and several other detenues in Bombay, Punjab, U.P., Bengal, etc., who were in jail for their alleged communist activities are now free.

- b) In no other place in India is the peasant's union illegal although the arguments of communist influence will hold good in many other places.
- c) The All-India Kisan Sabha which had its conference recently at Bhita under the presidentship of Com. Indulal Yagnik resolved to mobilize the kisans around the slogan of 'Win the peoples' war' and its leaders like Yagnik and Swami Sahajanand are giving an inspiring lead to the people all over India.

Under these circumstances, we urge upon you to lift the ban as early as possible, so that the peasants may put their maximum force in the task of winning the war.

Yours truly,
(no signature)

81. Reply from W.T. Bryant, PS to Governor, Madras, 30 July 1942
Public (Confidential) Department 1942, GOM 2291, TNSA.

Dear Mr. Rajagopalachari,

Further to my letter of July 23rd, His Excellency desires me to inform you that he has carefully re-considered the case for the removal of the ban on the Malabar Peasant Unions, but much regrets his inability to meet your request. The activities of the Unions, as you know, culminated in violent and murderous disorders, and His Excellency hopes you will appreciate his feeling that the removal of the ban would not be justified for the present.

His Excellency has, on the other hand, been pleased to direct the cancellation of the order of detention against Mr Sankaran Nambudripad, and a formal order is under issue.

In addition, the Government of India have since withdrawn the warrant issued by them against Sri P. Sudararama Reddi, as foreshadowed in Sir Reginald Maxwell's letter to you.

Yours sincerely,

W.T. Bryant

82. M.K. Gandhi to C. Rajagopalachari Asking Him to Come to Wardha, 20 July 1942
Correspondence with C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

My dear C.R.

.... Of course I understand and appreciate the exquisite consideration running through your letter. I invite you all four to come here and pour out your love or argument to wean me from what appears to be an error. Any way your monthly visit is due. You can come any day you like.

What I wanted to write you about was this. Why don't you form a league with Muslim friends to propagate your idea of settlement. Have you seen Q.A.'s reply to my note? Do you accept his definition of Pakistan?

What is the common idea about Independence? Surely you should have a common understanding over fundamentals before you come to an agreement.

Let not your fear of the Japs betray you into a worse state of things.

But more of all this when you come.

Love to you all

Bapu

83. C. Rajagopalachari to T.B. Saprú, 21 July 1942: M.K. Gandhi's Proposals Are Fraught with Gravest Mischief

Saprú Correspondence, National Library, Calcutta

My dear Sir Tej,

.... I am in a dilemma. I have differed often and expressed my dissent before this, but worked with and participated in the action taken by Mahatma Gandhi. But those were occasions when the differences were only negative i.e., utility or non-utility was the question. But now his proposals are fraught with the gravest mischief and I am unable conscientiously to sit silent. The dilemma is that if I express my strong opposition it is more than likely now to be misunderstood and only serve to confuse matters, and probably make some people more obstinate. Never before did I feel so miserable in public matters. Others are not expressing themselves as strongly as they should. Everybody seems intimidated by unthinking mass prejudice.

.... The Japs must be in high spirits reading the Congress statements that are issuing in the form of questions and answers every day. Imagine the idea that we are starting mass C.D. to get a training to resist Japan! We are supposed to be doing it all to strengthen the defence of the country! Even the idea of dispensing with all Government and order giving place only to spiritual communications between leading leaders and led!

84. C. Rajagopalachari to T.B. Saprú, 2 August 1942: 'Nobody Seems to Know the Way'

Saprú Correspondence, National Library, Calcutta.

My dear Sir Tej Bahadur,

.... The atmosphere is over-laden with fog and nobody seems to see his way.

With kindest regards,

C. Rajagopalachariar

85. C. Rajagopalachari to Maulana Azad: 'We Have No Right to Plunge the Country into Disorder', 4 August 1942

C. Rajagopalachari Papers, Microfilm, NMML, Roll No. 2.

Dear Maulana Sahib,

I have no right to advise you. Still I crave your leave to send these few words on this critical occasion for the consideration of colleagues with whom I have worked so long.

Whoever may be in the wrong and whoever may be to blame for it, so long as we cannot form a strong provisional government commanding the willing and immediate allegiance of the people of this vast country we have no rational basis for non-violent mass action of the kind now contemplated. We have no right at this juncture to plunge the country into disorder when we are so near to if not actually in the zone of war. A definite understanding and support from the enemy may justify revolutionary action on the part of a suffering and humiliated people, but that principle has no application in the present case.

I beg that you at once offer to Mr. Jinnah the clearest assurance that the people of every territorial area will have the right of political self-determination and ask him to co-operate with you now in the nomination of twelve trusty men to take over the entire Government of India from Britain pending the settlement of the constitution.

You say that the present proposal for direct action against British authority is the only way to achieve a national basis for the proper defence of the country and that the British attitude has left no other alternative. I respectfully urge that this is far too artificial an argument and that in view of the enormous peril involved it should be given up.

I beg that Gandhiji may be given fullest authority to come to terms with the Muslim League and then lead the country either in negotiations with Britain or otherwise.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/- C. Rajagopalachari

86. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to C. Rajagopalachari from Birla House,
Bombay, 4 August 1942, about Meeting 'Q.A.'
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 369.

MY DEAR C.R.,

How can you expect me to approach Q. A. after his performance? Will he not be right in showing me the door if I dare to go to him? I should certainly refuse to see a person whom I thoroughly distrust and discredit. Supposing he is great and good enough to see me, what am I to say to him? Begin by giving him an explanation of all the charges? I had thought that you would wire to me not to go and that you were disowning him after his performance. The Muslims who had expected me to see him no longer think so. I do not think I shall wire you to come here. This has nothing to do with your wire.

There is not the atmosphere.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Of course you must pay your monthly visit.



87. M.K. Gandhi's Telegram to C. Rajagopalachari Stating That Every Effort Has Been Made in Direction Indicated by C. Rajagopalachari, 7 August 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 376.

RAJAJI

THYAGARAYANAGAR

MADRAS

EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN AND WILL BE MADE IN
DIRECTION INDICATED BY YOU THOUGH NOT IDENTICAL.

LOVE.

BAPU

Chapter 11. Reactions to the War Situation: Food and Cloth Shortage, Panic, Rumours, Exodus

1. Congress Working Committee Resolution on Indians in Burma and Malaya, Bardoli, 23–30 December 1941
AICC Papers, F. No. G-26/1942 (Part 1), NMML.

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress record their deep sympathy with the people of Malaya, Burma and the East Indies, particularly the Indian residents in those countries, in the trials and hardships they are facing as a result of the world conflict between ambitious and grasping nations. India, absorbed in her own problems and difficulties, cannot forget her children abroad and trusts that they will, in the midst of the novel perils they have to face, hold together and organize such mutual help as may be possible, and thus wrench strength out of misfortune.

2. M.K. Gandhi on 'Real War Effort': On the Way to Kashi,
19 January 1942
CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 233–6.

The greatest need of the immediate present is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. There is already scarcity in the land both of food and clothing. As the war progresses, both the scarcities must increase. There are no imports from outside, either of food-stuff or of cloth. The well-to-do may not feel the pinch as yet or at all, but the poor are feeling it now. The well-to-do live on the poor. There is no other way. What is then their duty? He who saves gains as much, that is to say, he produces as much. Hence those who feel for the poor, those who would be one with them must curtail their wants. There are many ways. I shall only mention some here. There is much, too much food eaten and wasted by the well-to-do. Use one grain at a time. Chapati, rice, and pulses, milk, *gur*, ghee, and oil are used in ordinary households besides vegetables and fruit. I regard this as an unhealthy combination. Those who get animal protein in the shape of milk, cheese, eggs or meat need not use pulses at all. The poor people get only vegetable protein. If the well-to-do give up pulses and oils, they set free these two essentials for the poor who get neither animal protein nor animal fat. Then the grain eaten should not be sloppy. Half the quantity suffices when it is eaten dry and not dipped in any gravy. It is well to eat it with raw salads such as onion, carrot, radish, salad leaves, tomatoes. An ounce or two of salads serves the purpose of eight ounces of cooked vegetables.

Chapatis or bread should not be eaten with milk. To begin with, one meal may be raw vegetables and chapati or bread, and the other cooked vegetables with milk or curds. Sweet dishes should be eliminated altogether. Instead, *gur* or sugar in small quantities may be taken with milk or bread or by itself. Fresh fruit is good to eat, but only a little is necessary to give tone to the system. It is an expensive article, and an over-indulgence by the well-to-do has deprived the poor and the ailing of an article which they need much more than the well-to-do. Any medical man who has studied the science of dietetics will certify that what I have suggested can do no harm to the body, on the contrary it must conduce to better health. This is only one way of saving food-stuff. It is obvious. But by itself it cannot produce much visible effect. Grain-dealers have to shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor. They should be in touch with the people in their neighbourhood. Congressmen have to visit grain-dealers within their beat and give them the message of the time.

By far the most important part of the work consists in educating the villagers to keep what they have and to induce cultivation of fresh crops wherever water is available. This requires widespread and intelligent propaganda. It is not generally known that bananas, potatoes, beetroot, yam and *suran*, and in a measure pumpkin are a food crop easily grown. They can take the place of bread in time of need. There is, too, scarcity of money. There may be grain available but no money to buy it with. There is no money because there is no employment. This has to be found. Spinning is the readiest and the handiest. But local needs may supply other sources of labour. Every available source has to be tapped so that there is no want of employment. Only the lazy ones need and must starve. Patient handling will induce even this class to shed their laziness.

The problem of clothing is much easier than feeding, if it is handled well and in time. The mills may not be relied on in these times. There is ample cotton to be had in India. It is a problem for cotton cultivators how to dispose of their stock. The outside market is closed to them. Our mills cannot absorb the whole of the crop. It can be utilized, if the nation takes to spinning not for wages but for the sake of clothing the naked. Of course those who need employment will spin for profit. This number must be limited. They need organizing. Much money will be needed for the purpose. But national spinning does not need so much organizing. Profit motive being eliminated and willingness being assumed, organization is reduced to simplest terms. This is no time for multiplying wheels. They take time to manufacture. Raw materials are daily becoming dearer. Wheels cannot be manufactured everywhere. Places where they are can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Therefore I suggest the plying of the *dhanush takli* and even the simple *takli*. The former should be manufactured locally. Indeed it is difficult to manufacture the simple *takli* at once in lacs. The *dhanush takli* is the only thing which can be easiest manufactured. Slivers cannot be supplied to spinners. Each one should get some cotton for himself or herself, and card it as well as may be with the hand or with a home-made small bow such as the children in the Bihar basic schools have. All this can be done because no one is expected to manufacture a large quantity of yarn. If every one of our available millions span for one hour daily, there would be enough yarn to keep every handloom going. The reader should know that there are lacs of handloom weavers in the land. There is danger of their starving for want of yarn. Here is a great task for every Congressman to undertake. He has to become a good spinner and carder and know how to manufacture the *dhanush takli*. Let

every Congressman begin with himself and his family and neighbours, and he will find that the life-giving contagion spreads like wild fire which envelops you before you hardly know what you are witnessing.

Any organization that tackles these two problems successfully will command the love and confidence of the people. I hope that all will join in this real war effort. It is none the less effective because it is peaceful and constructive. Will the Princes let their people do this work without let or hindrance? Will Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah allow the members of the Muslim League to co-operate with the Congress workers in this truly national but non-political work which is also humanitarian? There are 23,000 Muslim spinners, carders and weavers earning their daily bread through the A.I.S.A.

3. Exodus of about 1/3rd of Madras Population: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Madras
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The exodus from Madras City appears to have exhausted itself for the present and more people cannot leave without considerable personal sacrifice and inconvenience. The preparations that were being made in Madras for the defence of the City and false and unfounded rumours about the molestation of women by troops, looting by rowdies etc. have been largely responsible for the exodus from the City and it is estimated that about 1/3rd of the population have left Madras by road and rail....

LABOUR—The demand by the workers of Madras for an advance of pay to evacuate their families continues....

4. Bombay and Gujarat: Sense of Pessimism, Unsettled Markets,
Withdrawals from Banks and Post Offices: Extract from Fortnightly
Report for Bombay for the First Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

War—Public attention was focused on the battle for Singapore. The general tone of the newspapers, especially the vernacular newspaper, was pessimistic, and there was a tendency to anticipate bad news and to describe in advance the dangers that would threaten if Singapore fell.... A few families belonging to the middle-classes of Kathiawar and Gujarat are gradually leaving the City to avoid difficulty in the event of evacuation. Bar silver is also being dispatched from Bombay under special guards.

As soon as the attack on Singapore started, the Bombay markets became extremely unsettled. The price of Broach cotton fell by about Rs. 30. Textile markets report cancellation of orders from up-country and forward buying has been limited to the minimum....

In Ahmedabad City, there is considerable alarm over the war situation, and markets are depressed. Also, withdrawals from banks and post offices continue to be made on a fairly large scale.

The District Magistrate, Ratnagiri, reports that, due to the spread of false rumours there is some uneasiness in the towns, particularly among the merchants who expect a collapse in the share market and also a fall in prices of cotton.

.... Four ships arrived in Bombay during the fortnight from Singapore with about 1,500 evacuees, of whom about 1,400 are Indians (the majority from Madras) and the rest British and Chinese.

5. Bengal: Withdrawals from Savings Banks and Encashment of Certificates: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

Continued Japanese successes in Burma and Malaya have led to increasing uneasiness and alarm though the Burdwan Commissioner reports some tendency to represent that the danger of air raids has been exaggerated and to take refuge in complacency.... there are reports from both the Burdwan and the Rajshahi Divisions of heavy withdrawals from the savings-bank and encashment of certificates on the ground that cash and currency notes are better than bank balances or paper ... The necessity to counteract Japanese radio propaganda continues.

6. Letter to the General Secretary, AICC, from Sachi Mohan Chowdhuri, Special Worker for Burma Refugees, Chittagong District Congress Committee, 6 March 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

Dear Sir,

I beg most respectfully to inform you that our secretary Sj. Barada Prasad Nandy has informed you about our relief work for the refugees from Burma and evacuees at Chittagong. Now we have received a vivid description of the condition of one of the land roads from Burma via Prome and Akyab.... The question of the Burma refugee is an All India problem. So All India Congress Committee should take the matter in his [*sid*] hand and should try to send volunteers with fund at Prome, Padaung, different stations between Padaung and Taungup, Kyankpyu, Akyab and Mongchu to supply drinking water, food and medical aid. Tamil and Telegu knowing volunteers are urgently required as the large number of the refugees belong to them. I therefore hope you should kindly draw the attention of the provincial congress committees in this direction and send us their addresses to correspond with them if necessity arises.

There are four roads from Burma to India. (1) Arakan Road extended upto [*sid*] Chittagong. The refugees from Burma start from Prome and reach Akyab via Padaung, Tanugup, Kyankpyu or they may come from Minbu to Akyabi via An-Pass. The Chittagong Congress relief workers have to deal with refugees of this road ...

(2) Monipuri road—begins either from Alone or Wintha. Monipur is a native state. There may not be any congress committee or any other public society to help the refugee. (3) Hukon Valley road from Hopin to Digboy in Assam. We do not know whether Assam Congress committee have made any arrangement for the refugees through this road.

The Chittagong congress committee is in need of fund for relief work and burden of whole India has fallen upon it. So we hope you kindly try to help with fund.

If you kindly give the wide circulation of this matter in the important papers of India, the solution of the problem may be easily solved [*sid*].

Perhaps you know from the column of the newspaper that about forty thousand people have been ordered to evacuate the suburb of Chittagong Port. Our volunteers are also busy for helping the people. So our duties are two fold namely the Burma refugees and evacuees in Chittagong. Yesterday we have been requested by Mr. B.G. Marathe special evacuation officer, overseas department, Government of India at present in Chittagong to send some Congress volunteers to different halting stations in Burma. These volunteers are required to proceed Akyab via Chittagong.

Our Congress president has wired to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad President A.I.C.C. for volunteers and funds. May I request you to move the matter in right earnest.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Sachi Mohan Chowdhuri B.Sc.
Special Worker for Burma Refugees
Chittagong District Congress Committee

7. Attached Note Titled 'Troubles and Difficulties in the Land Route from Burma to Chittagong'

AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 1) 1942, NMML.

The Chittagong Dist. Congress Committee has begun the relief work for the Burma refugees since the 11th of February 1942. After the close of Rangoon Port, the land route is the only path for the refugees to come to Chittagong. The refugee requires twenty days to one month to reach Chittagong. Now we have got a vivid description of the road from many educated gentlemen. They described as follows: 'We started from Rangoon by Railway train and reached Prome and then started for Padaung by Ferry Steamer or by country-boat (a distance of 10 miles) Padaung to Taungup—a hilly route of 110 miles is the most difficult and dangerous road. On the one side of the road, there is the high mountain (Arakan Yome) and on the other side Gorge about 3000 feet deep. The route is incomplete and narrow and haunted by dacoits and bad characters. The most troublesome and difficult problem is the scarcity of water. The refugees had to carry water from Padaung. The rich people who can hire bullock-cart carry water with them. The car could be hired at the rate of Rs 25/- previously. Now the rate has risen to Rs 50/- to Rs 110/- due to corruption of the Government officials and—to some extent—scarcity of cart. The Police has the control over bullock-cart and the cost of hiring a cart should be paid before leaving for Taungup to the Police-station at Padaung. The notorious cart-men to extract more money from the refugees throw away their articles and leave the refugee on the middle path. If the refugees make any complaint against cart-men to the police officer, he does not take any action on it. On the other hand, the Police-men loot the articles thrown away by the cart-men. Thus it is apparent that the Police had under-hand-means and understanding with the cart-men. Those gentlemen—with women and children are the most sufferers. The poor refugees who come on foot cannot carry sufficient water with them. Hundreds of poor refugees died on the road for want of water, exhaustion and cholera and their dead bodies are rotting on the road. Thus road becomes dangerous and unfit. Arrangements should be made immediately for water, medical aid for cholera and removal of the dead bodies and sanitary measures. The cart requires 6 days to pass it and provision for food also should be made.

On reaching Taungup—the refugees are not allowed to enter into the town. There is no shelter house and they had to remain in an open space among the dead bodies, as cholera had broken out there and many hundreds of people died. The Government made no arrangements for the treatment, sanitation and the removal of the dead bodies. There is one doctor—without proper equipment. There is scarcity of water, the cost of one bucket of water is twelve annas. The food-stuff is very dear and the cost of very high [*sic*].... The small steamer from Taungup to Kyaukphy can carry only 200 persons. The steamer fare was Rs 3/- previously and has risen to Rs 12/- due to the corruption of the employees of the steamer company. For this reason many refugees are held up there and suffering from many difficulties and diseases and the poor refugees cannot afford to pay this high rate. For want of accommodation in the steamer, some refugees had to hire country-boats. The boatmen take the fare before leaving Taungup and if the passengers get ashore for cooking or answering natural call, the boatmen leave them there at the mercy of the Burma dacoits. Some frauds sold their own tickets to the poor refugees at the rate of Rs 5/- and deceived them.'

Now arrangements should be made at Taungup for more steamers to carry the refugees, shelter-house medical aid, water supply and food-stuff immediately.

Arrangements should also be made to carry them from Kyaunpyu to Akyab.

This vivid description of the road already shows the difficulties. We urge the Government and the public to do the needful in this matter.

Sachi Mohan Chowdhuri

8. Reply from Sadik Ali, AICC Office Secretary, to Sachi Mohan Chowdhuri, 13 March 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 1) 1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

Your letter of the 6th inst. We thank you for the report you have sent about refugees and evacuees. The matter you have referred to us is one which it is primarily for the P.C.C. to consider. The P.C.C.'s should find ways and means of tackling the problem. The Bengal P.C.C. is in constant touch with the President. You may therefore be sure that whatever help the A.I.C.C. can give will be given.

You will please send us a report of the latest developments in Chittagong District and surrounding areas.

Yours sincerely,

S. Ali

Office Secretary

9. Cawnpore Labour: Rumours and Panic—Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the First Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

Though anxiety about the war increases and one or two of the larger cities are 'jumpy', there has been little change in the general situation which one Commissioner describes as 'ignorance and apathy in the villages: concern but no panic in the towns'....

6.... Cawnpore labour has recently been considerably upset by rumours that on order to ensure that they will not run away when the town is bombed they are to be chained to their machines. This has led to considerable absenteeism and one day Messrs. Cooper Allens works were 25 per cent under strength, and the Harness and Saddlery Factory 25 percent under strength on another. Delay in the departure of one shift from one of the largest Indian owned mills in the city seemed to confirm another rumour to the effect that workers were being forcibly taken off to the war by rail and it was only with the greatest difficulty and after considerable delay that the next shift could be persuaded to enter the mill.

10. Wheat Shortage in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab in the First Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

1. The War—It is impossible at present to forecast with any degree of accuracy the effects on public morale of the fall of Singapore, but the general situation in the Far East during the last fortnight has greatly intensified alarm and despondency and has had a very unsettling effect on people of all classes. The feeling of unrest has been aggravated by a shortage of wheat in some places, the general suspension of business throughout the province and the difficulty of getting essential supplies. Rumours have been less frequent and less malignant, but the stories of evacuees and refugees from the Far East and of soldiers on leave, alarmist letters from Burma and Calcutta, the defeatist tone of the Hindu vernacular press, and enemy broadcasts, which are now widely listened to and discussed, have combined to create an atmosphere of insecurity and defeatism....

The wheat situation in the province is causing anxiety. Returns of wheat stocks over twenty maunds have come in and seem to show that the total visible stock in the province is insufficient to meet even the normal requirements of the local civil population till the new crop becomes available towards the end of April, or the beginning of May. In addition, a heavy demand from the military has to be met and neighbouring areas such as Delhi and the North-West Frontier Province depend on the Punjab for their supply. It seems certain that the reported figure does not represent the actual total, considerable stocks having gone under ground, both in the hope of getting better prices when the shortage becomes acute, and through nervousness at the present international situation. Shortage of stocks has been specially reported from big wheat-producing districts such as Lyallpur, Montgomery and Ferozepur....

11. Exodus from Jamshedpur: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar during the First Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

1. THE WAR—.... Though there is no panic as yet, there is feeling of considerable alarm, particularly in places like Jamshedpur. The exodus from Jamshedpur continues and shopkeepers are reported to be clearing off their stocks. Something like 46,000 people have gone away and probably there are not more than 100,000. Those who have left are mostly women, children and relatives of the work-people, but some drain on labour is reported from the Cable Company and the Tinsplate Company.... The arrival of troops in Ranchi has made the evacuees from Calcutta consider the place not as safe as before and some of them are reported to have gone back. The

arrival of British troops in Jamshedpur also is reported to have added to the exodus mainly of families from the area near the place where the troops are encamped for fear of molestation.

12. Central Provinces and Berar: Sense of Uneasiness and Gloom—Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Central Provinces and Berar for the First Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The War—The fortnight was one of unrelieved gloom, and the battle for Singapore was watched with growing anxiety. The fall of Singapore has aggravated uneasiness. There is much concern over the Japanese advance in Burma, and fear is expressed that Rangoon may share the fate of Singapore. There are even indications of a weakening of the confidence in the victory of the Allies. The Tokyo radio is reported to be popular...

4. Labour—.... A large number of bidi workers in the Bhandara district are reported to have been thrown out of employment owing to the closure of bidi factories, due to the disturbed trade conditions in Burma and Assam, coupled with the lack of wagons.

13. Assam: Refugee Influx and Its Impact—Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the First Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

1. The War There has been a considerable movement of families belonging to persons domiciled in other parts of India away from the province. Arrivals of refugees from Burma via both Calcutta and Manipur State have encouraged these tendencies in the Assam Valley.... One statement circulated by persons who had been in touch with refugees from Rangoon and Chittagong was to the effect that the Japanese had carefully abstained from bombing a Buddhist temple, whereupon the British air force had deliberately raided it in order to inculcate the Japanese.... It appears that labourers to some extent still tend to withdraw their provident fund deposits on resignation, but the number is not large.... Several rumour-mongers in Lakhimpur are being prosecuted.

14. Jawaharlal Nehru's Press Statement on Evacuees from Burma, 24 February 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 145–6.

Yesterday I visited the Lucknow railway station in the company of Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Mr. Newal Kishore Halvasia to meet the evacuees from Burma and elsewhere, who are passing through Lucknow on their way to the north. I was surprised to find that the railway authorities, more especially of the B.N.W.R. and the R.K.R., were paying little attention to these people.

It appears that for a long time past crowds of people, coming from Burma via Assam, have been reaching Lucknow, changing trains here, and then proceeding to Delhi or elsewhere. These people were treated with scant courtesy by the railway staff and indeed very serious complaints were made about their behaviour. Accidentally, some friends noticed the ill-treatment and tried to arrange help through the volunteers of the Agarwal Sabha. These volunteers were not allowed to function at first but ultimately a few were given passes and for the last three

or four weeks, they have rendered valuable service to the evacuees by seeing that they are not imposed upon by others, by arranging for their accommodation as far as possible, and by giving them light refreshments.

Every day, from 70 to over 100 evacuees passed through Lucknow and spent many hours at the station. Owing to the efforts of the Agarwal Sabha and their volunteers, something has been achieved. But much more could be done if the railway authorities did not come in the way....

I would urge upon the railway authorities, both in their interest and in the interest of the evacuees and the public, to cooperate in this matter with the volunteers who have offered their services for this selfless work. This will ease the situation and bring a small measure of comfort to the unhappy persons, who have had to leave their homes and often nearly all their belongings and are now traveling to almost unknown places.

15. UPCC's Statement about Evacuation and Advice to Subordinate Units

The National Herald, 26 February 1942.

The following statement has been made by Mr. Keshava Deva Malaviya, secretary of the UPCC:

The problem of evacuees is gaining importance daily in our province. Mahatma Gandhi has also very recently drawn our attention to the problem and has advised the people living in urban areas to quietly withdraw in the countryside if they so desire. It is clear that he wants no panic in such movements.

The PCC realizes its duty in this connection. It, therefore, advises the Congress committees of this province to devote as much of their time and energy to this problem as they can conveniently spare. Although there is not much urgency in this work today yet it may prove useful in the long run and people might get relief and help from our organization when the time comes.

We, therefore, advise generally and especially to the city committees of Allahabad, Benares, Lucknow and Cawnpore to appoint one officer in their respective areas who will examine the question of evacuees, gather information in this connection, and make arrangements, wherever possible, for the evacuation of such groups of persons as want to withdraw to the countryside. The important work in this connection will be to communicate with landlords and other owners of land in the rural side for sites of building of residential quarters and other details in this connection.

16. Heavy Exodus from Madras City; Misbehaviour of Australian Soldiers in Cochin: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/1942, NAI.

WAR—The news of the fall of Singapore, the launching of a full scale attack on the Netherlands East Indies and the Japanese advance in Burma have increased the apprehensions of the public regarding an attack on South India in general and on Madras City in particular. However there are no signs of a general panic. The Government issued a Press Communique informing the people of Madras that there was no necessity for any one to leave the City but that those who had no business to keep them in the City and wished to leave later might do so as soon as

they conveniently could, in order to avoid rush and confusion. There has since been a heavy exodus from the city. There has also been a demand on the part of the public for the early closing of Schools and Colleges. All schools and colleges in the City have been advised to hold their annual examinations earlier in order to permit students who wish to leave the city to do so as soon as possible. The Universities have also permitted students of City College to appear for their University examinations in mufassal centres. The exodus from the city is expected to be heavy during the first week of March and arrangements are being made by the Railway authorities to provide additional trains to cope with this traffic....

MISCELLANEOUS—

There was some commotion in Cochin as a result of the mis-behaviour of some Australian soldiers from the Middle East. They are said to have carried away articles from shops when the shop-keepers refused to accept pound notes. The articles carried away were however returned the next day by the Officers Commanding. A police constable was also assaulted and his lathi broken.

17. Exodus from Bombay City, Arrest of Leaders Spreading Alarmist News, Alarm among Taxi Drivers Because of Motor Vehicle Drivers Ordinance: Extract from the Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The exodus from Bombay City of Gujaratis, Marwaris, Cutchis and Kathiawaris continues, and some movement towards the Konkan has also started. A majority of those leaving are women and children. Although the textile workers received their bonus on February 21st, not very many have left the City. This is attributed partly to the difficulty of obtaining passages on coastal steamers and the expense involved of going by the alternative rail route.

The Commissioner, Northern Division, reports that there is considerable alarm in his division over the war situation and that withdrawals from Banks and Post Offices are being made on a fairly large scale.

On the other hand, the Commissioner, Southern Division, states that the war situation in the East has not so far affected the collections to the war loans and war gift funds, though there is noticeable everywhere a strong undercurrent of general nervousness.

In Sholapur, the fall of Singapore has resulted in some uneasiness which has affected business to some extent....

... some political agitators have, for some time now, been spreading defeatist and anti-British sentiments. The chief offenders in this respect are Messrs. N.V. Gadgil, ex-M.L.A. (Central), S.D. Deo, a member of the Congress Working Committee and P.H. Patwardhan, who was released from detention in December last in consequence of the amnesty to satyagrahis. The first has since been arrested and detained and will be prosecuted in addition. In respect of the second, Government has decided that, before taking any action, the District Magistrate, Poona, should see him and try to persuade him to desist from such utterances. The District Magistrate, Ahmednagar, is prosecuting Patwardhan. The question of prosecuting another congressman for making a similar speech is being considered by the District Magistrate, East Khandesh.

.... In order to secure the maintenance of essential public utility services in Bombay City in the present emergency, a notification under section 3 of the Emergency Services (Maintenance)

Ordinance was issued on the 20th February making the provisions of the Ordinance applicable to all employment under the Bombay Port Trust, the Bombay Municipal Corporation, the Bombay Electric Supply and Tramways Company, Limited, the Bombay Telephone Company Limited, and the oil installations of the Burma-Shell Oil Storage and Distributing Company of India, Limited, Caltex (India) Limited and of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company Limited.... Similar notifications have since issued also in respect of the Bombay Gas Company, Limited, the Tata Hydro-Electric Agencies, Limited, and the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company Limited.

It was decided on 17th February 1942 to apply the Motor Vehicles Drivers Ordinance to all drivers of public vehicles throughout the Province.

In Bombay City, mainly owing to tactless action by the Regional Transport Officer, the taxi-drivers took alarm, fearing that they were to be conscripted into service as drivers of military vehicles, including even tanks, and threatened non-cooperation. However, explanations and assurances have been given by Government to Mr. Jhabvala, M.L.A, the leader of their Union, and it is hoped that there will be no further trouble.

A total contingent of 650 evacuees (British, Indian and Chinese) arrived in Bombay from Singapore on February 17th.

18. Food Scarcity in Bombay Province: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

In view of the unfavourable agricultural situation prevailing in some parts of this Province, the following measures were taken or are being taken:

- (1) Scarcity was declared in the whole of the Umbergaon taluka and in parts of the Dahanu and the Palghar talukas of the Thana district and relief measures are being started in these areas.
- (2) Scarcity is being declared in the Ahmednagar district and steps are being taken to provide employment for the able bodied and gratuitous relief to the infirm and to inferior village servants.
- (3) A ban is being imposed on the export of fodder from the Purandhar taluka of the Poona district.

19. Declare Our Cities 'Open Cities': Letter from Rammanohar Lohia to M.K. Gandhi, 22 February 1942

Correspondence with Rammanohar Lohia, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

Dear Mahatmaji,

When I was in Calcutta, my father asked me if it were not possible to have Calcutta, Bombay and such other Indian towns including Rangoon declared 'open cities'. I have come across that suggestion again in Bombay in a slightly concrete form. Why should we not agitate to have our larger towns including Rangoon declared open? And no nation-wide propagation of an idea can be made in our country unless it is by you.

One difficulty will be the attitude of the British government which, for reasons of its own, may not like to declare our towns open. That obviously is no argument against the idea, if it

is, on merits, just and opportune. We have in the past agitated for many things irrespective of whether the Government wanted them or not.

Another difficulty will be guess-work about what Japan or any other invading Power may do, in spite of the declaration of open towns. Manila may be dressed up as an argument against our demand of open towns and it may be suggested that, although the Americans declared it open the Japanese still bombed it. We are in no position here to assess the rights and wrongs of the case in Manila. The declaration of open towns must not be merely formal; it must be worked out in utter honesty and the town should not be used for any military purposes whatsoever. If, notwithstanding, the Japanese or any other Power still bomb our honestly open towns, there will be a vast revulsion of popular feeling against this type of bombing. It will help the cause of non-violence and Britain herself may welcome it as this will prove her moral superiority over the other Power. For the rest, we presume honesty on both sides as we must.

There is no doubt that the demand for open towns is just, humane and opportune. Large masses of men and vast net-work of amenities of life, which make up a big town, should be spared the horrors of bombing and Britain, Japan and other Powers should be asked to accept this position, at least, as far as our country is concerned. This may have influence upon the course of war elsewhere. Moreover, citizens of nations which have been dragged into the war against their wishes, as in Burma and India, have a particular right to claim to be left in peace.

As far as I could see, there is an eagerness in such far-flung cities as Bombay and Calcutta for this declaration and, if you give the first expression to this mute voice, it will reverberate with irresistible force throughout the country.

I may make an honest admission. The humanitarian aspect of the declaration impresses me and very much, but there is also a whole complex of other motives. I want the cause of non-violence to prevail even during the war, however partially, and would at the same time like to register, however partially, the neutrality of the people of India towards this war.

Asoka and Minoo share the desire that the demand should be made and immediately in view of the danger to the people of Rangoon. It would be a pity to miss this opportunity of cementing Indo-Burmese friendship and of raising this question in time....

Respectfully yours

Rammanohar

20. Widespread Alarm and Despondency in Bengal: Extract from
Fortnightly Report of Bengal for the Second Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The fall of Singapore and continued Japanese advances in Burma have combined with fears of an actual invasion of the Province to create widespread alarm and some despondency but not as yet any mass panic.... Unusually large withdrawals of Savings Bank deposit and the cashing of defence savings certificates are reported from three Divisions.... While there is certainly very little general sympathy with Japan there is probably a widespread view that submission would be the most expedient, if not the only practical stratagem in the event of an invasion. There can be little doubt that generally the thinking public is skeptical of the chance of an effective resistance by the armed forces, and the continued rumours directed at creating the conviction that Japan will treat Asiatics considerately encourage fatalistic resignation. Refugees continue to arrive both from Malaya and from Burma: some 14,000 are estimated to have passed through

Calcutta from mid-January to mid-February and large numbers have also passed through Chittagong where the populace has by now become accustomed to their arrival and transit.

.... The general unsettled opinion has had a bad effect on rent and loan collections which are unsatisfactory in most of the cases reported....

21. Sense of Fear in UP; Popularity of Enemy Radio Broadcasts: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the United Provinces for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

.... 2. The fall of Singapore has made a very deep impression, not only on the towns but in the countryside, from where a large number of soldiers serving in the Far East had been recruited. There is no panic, but there is fear. Fear, principally, of what will happen to the individual if there should be a breakdown in the administration of law and order. Some zamindars are said to be organizing bodies of retainers, others to be adopting a policy of appeasement towards their tenants. Traders are converting paper into bullion and are even reluctant to hand in 'Victoria' rupees. The tone of Congress speeches, if only partially responsible for this situation, does nothing to improve it. Stress continues to be laid on the inevitability of the fall of Government and the necessity of people taking steps for their own protection....

As one Commissioner writes, the country is 'agog with unhealthy rumours.'... In the present state of the public morale the wildest rumours are bound to grow and circulate but many are probably put about designedly or have their origin in the broadcasts from Tokio, to which increased attention is being paid. There is a corresponding decrease in the reliance placed on news from British sources.

22. Food Scarcity in Punjab: Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The wheat situation in the Province continues to cause anxiety. Acute scarcity or impending scarcity of stocks is now reported from twelve districts, in some of which it has been found necessary to requisition supplies.... Price control as between districts needs to be further correlated, and the comparatively high prices obtaining in mandis in adjoining States acts as a bar to the import of fresh supplies to this Province....

23. Acquiring of Weapons for Self-defence in Bhagalpur, Purchase of Land, Alarmist Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The fall of Singapore and the Japanese advance in Burma have caused a great deal of anxiety coupled with the feeling that India, if attacked, will be found as unprepared as the rest of the Far East. There is a feeling of helplessness and resignation mingled with fear of internal disorder as shown by an increase in the number of applications for revolver and other weapons in Bhagalpur. A number of persons are purchasing land and buildings as a precaution against

devaluation of the currency and withdrawals from savings banks during the first three weeks of February have been nearly double those of the corresponding period last year. There is a marked tendency to indulge in wishful thinking that the Japanese are likely to treat Indians kindly and Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's reference to Japanese atrocities are not believed by everybody. There are some who consider that Chiang Kai-shek will enter into an alliance with Japan having seen for himself the weakness of the British and the lack of sympathy between them and the Indians ... Alarmist rumours probably originating from enemy broadcasts continue to circulate. A mythical havildar of the Indian army on leave is said to have complained of bad treatment of Indian troops by British officers which has resulted in grave discontent and incipient mutiny. In Jamshedpur one of the rumours current was that the 'scorched earth' policy will be followed and the works blown up without notice. People in Ranchi and Calcutta are reported to have heard a Japanese broadcast showing that in Japan they were aware of the troop movements in Chota Nagpur and knew even the names of the officers in command....

Recruiting continues dull and there is some evidence of anti-recruiting effort. The motor drivers of Patna city have formed a Union and expressed their reluctance to join military service in case they were called upon by Government to do so....

.... The exodus of labour from Tatas and the Tinsplate Company at Jamshedpur continues. The policy of granting advances and leave to workers has led to a rumour that the reason for encouraging evacuation is that Tatas hope to close the works soon and thus lessen the possibility of air raids. The resident population of Jamshedpur has now sunk to less than 1,00,000 about 63,000 having left by train and several thousand more by bus.

24. Withdrawals from Savings Banks, 'Alarmist' Speeches by Congress Leaders: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Central Provinces and Berar for the Second Half of February and the First Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The War—There is considerable speculation in regard to future developments in the Far Eastern theatre of the war. The Eastern districts of the Province and the larger urban centres have been rife with rumours and forebodings in regard to possible Japanese moves in the near future—Vizagapatnam and Madras are commonly regarded as likely points of Japanese attack, but fear is centred round possible outbreaks of lawlessness in the more thickly populated urban areas. The mantle of invincibility has, after the German reverses in Russia, fallen on Japanese shoulders, and there is no denying the fact that amongst the intelligentsia in urban areas the reverses in Malaya, Java and Burma have had a most unsettling effect.... Withdrawals from Savings Bank accounts and encashment of cash certificates during the period from the 8th February 1942 to the 7th March 1942 exceed deposits and purchases respectively by Rs.2.99 lakhs and Rs.3.42 lakhs....

.... Arrangements for the reception of evacuees from Burma have been made in Nagpur and non-official assistance was readily forthcoming.

Political—....

There have been a number of defeatist and anti-war speeches during the period under report by a certain section of Congress leaders in the Province. Mr. Waman Rao Joshi M.L.A. (Central) and Mr. D.P. Misra (ex-Minister) were the most important offenders. The latter

speaking at a meeting in support of the formation of Congress Volunteer Brigades (Sainik Dal) said that Imperialism was breathing its last and that in the event of an invasion of India it was British Imperialism which stood to lose....

25. Sense of Apprehension and Exodus from Assam: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Assam for the Second Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/1942, NAI.

1. The War. The many signs of Defence activity in Assam have perhaps had more effect in arousing apprehension as to what the future holds in store than the fall of Singapore or the retreat of the Imperial forces in Burma. There is little outward sign of panic in Lakhimpur; at Gauhati however a considerable exodus of persons domiciled in other parts of India has been observed.... Rumour is again particularly active in the Lakhimpur district ... One rumour which has had wide currency is that Japanese have appointed a Mr. Ghosh, son of a former Government Pleader of Mymensingh, as puppet Governor of Singapore; according to another account it was a Madras Muslim. Some of the rumours appear likely to have an enemy origin....

Labour. The figures of migration from the oilfields area show a considerable, but not alarming, rise. This appears to be due to anxiety caused by the passage of anti-aircraft guns, which disturbed in particular labour in the collieries.

26. Shock at Fall of Singapore, Shortage of Wheat: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for the North-West Frontier Province for the
Second Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The War—The fall of Singapore after an unexpectedly short resistance has come as a shock to all parts of the province. Uneasiness, which was previously confined to the towns, has now spread to rural areas and the public generally have become more susceptible to alarmist rumour and defeatist talk.

The shortage of wheat in the province continues to give rise to anxiety.

27. Feeling in Orissa That the British Government Is Not Prepared to
Meet the Japanese Invasion: Extract from Fortnightly Report for
Orissa for the Second Half of February 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

1. The War—The war news recently has naturally had a depressing effect. It is said that many people feel that the capture of Rangoon by the Japanese is imminent and that the British Government are not fully prepared to meet a Japanese invasion, especially since it was announced on the wireless that Japanese warships are operating in the Bay of Bengal and that sporadic raids on the coast are quite possible. It is stated that some people left Cuttack after that announcement....

Curiously enough, reported arrivals of troops, whether true or false, often cause apprehension....

Oriya evacuees from Burma are returning to the Province in a steady flow and arrangements have been made to look after their comfort on arrival in the Province and dispatch them to their destinations. Most of them are illiterate persons and belong to the cultivating class, but they all speak about the hatred of the Burmese for the Indians.... They, however, seem to believe that the Japanese will not harm Indians.

.... It is reported that the bus owners of Cuttack, apprehending that their buses will be commandeered as soon as the Japanese land on the Orissa coast, are trying to put them out of order.

28. 'Rumours' from Sindhi Merchants' Returning from Singapore:
Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the Second Half of
February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

1. War—The fall of Singapore and the Japanese advance in Burma have had a very depressing effect throughout the province, but more particularly perhaps in Karachi city. Many disturbing rumours were current, some to the effect that Calcutta and Madras were being evacuated. Returned Sind work merchants from Singapore, etc., have been responsible for some of the worst of them. So far, however, there has been no great rush to leave Karachi and the District Magistrate reports that evacuation has not assumed very serious proportions.

29. 'Expectant Tension' and Wheat Shortage in Delhi: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The War—The atmosphere of Delhi continues to be one of expectant tension. The strike at the Delhi Cloth Mills came to an end on the 21st February but to counterbalance this relief the wheat shortage has again become dangerously acute in consequence of action taken by the Punjab authorities to conserve their stocks.

30. Acute Scarcity of Wheat in Ajmer–Merwara: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Ajmer–Merwara for the Second Half of
February 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/2/42, NAI.

The wheat situation has further deteriorated. The stocks of wheat in the Ajmer Market have almost been exhausted, and no supplies have yet been received from the Punjab. The matter is being discussed with the Wheat Commissioner in Delhi. The demand for wheat is so great that customers are paying prices higher than the maximum rates fixed by the authorities, and no serious complaints have been made against the dealers. Considerable quantities of wheat were imported into the city from Kekri and Beawar and the prices paid at these markets were higher than the prices fixed officially, and naturally the selling price at Ajmer was higher still. Unless adequate supplies are received from outside in the near future the position is expected to become very serious.

31. Fear of Attack on Eastern Coast: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the First Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

WAR—The evacuation of Rangoon and the rapidity with which the Japanese overcame Dutch resistance in Java has had a depressing effect on the public who are apprehensive that the east coast of this Province may be attacked at any time. The causes of the failure of the Allies in these theatres of War have been critically examined in the Press and it is urged that the authorities in India should be guided by the lessons learnt by these failures. At the same time the people realize that they cannot get away from the war and must face it. Sri C. Rajagopalachariar has been addressing meetings and urging the people not to give way to panic, but to organize themselves for determined resistance as India did not want a change of masters.

32. Extract from Report of Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, Dated 13 March 1942, about Food Scarcity and Panic in Moplah Areas

AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

Kerala used to depend upon import of Burma rice for 1/3rd of its normal needs but this is now stopped. This may lead to internal disorder and some arrangements for supply of rice to Kerala must be made.

A prominent Muslim leader may be asked to tour the Province especially the Ernad Taluka which was the centre of the last Moplah rebellion. People have become panicky in these areas and a tour of a prominent Muslim from outside will allay panic.

33. Exodus from Bombay, Burying of Wealth by Gujarat Merchants, Misbehaviour of Soldiers: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

2. War—....

There is evidence that in the European community beneath the surface there is a feeling of distrust of the Civil Government and of the Military Command in India. This is probably due to the inexplicable collapse of resistance at Singapore with the consequent chaos of the evacuation, vivid details of which have been supplied by the refugees arriving in Bombay. The continued failure of our forces to bring to a halt the Japanese advance in Burma has also contributed.

The exodus from Bombay city increased since March 10th, which was the pay day of the mill-hands. The G.I.P. Railway has been running special trains from the 11th instant on an average of six a day and the ferry steamers across the harbour and the coastal steamers to Ratnagiri have been packed with passengers.

.... In Gujarat generally there was a good deal of alarm amongst the public in regard to the safety of persons and property and heavy withdrawals from Banks and Post Offices continued.

The following causes contributed to the extreme nervousness in the city of Ahmedabad:

- (a) the Ahmedabad Textile Association's appeal to the unemployed textile workers to leave the City;
- (b) increases announced in recruitment to the police;
- (c) patrols of armed police in the City during the Holi festival;
- (d) the decision of the Municipal School Board to put forward the date of the Primary School Examinations; and
- (e) the Air Raid Alarm exercise held on March 3rd.

As a result, a few thousand people have left the City in addition to unemployed mill-hands. However, it is satisfactory that the Commissioner reports that in Ahmedabad there is co-operation between Government, the Congress and other organizations, which are all doing what they can for the defence of the City and the maintenance of the public morale.

In Surat, some members of the merchant class have either buried their valuables or sunk them in wells for safety.

.... The Commissioner, Southern Division, states that the exodus from Bombay City to districts in his Division is having a disquieting effect on people dwelling in the outlying tracts, particularly as the new comers carry with them the rumours and stories current in the City. However, he states that collections for the war loan and war gift funds are being made as usual and that public morale on the whole continues to be good. He attributes the latter to a certain extent to the propaganda undertaken by the Congress, the Hindu Maha Sabha and other organizations for the purpose of organizing volunteer defence bodies....

Evacuees

About 900 more British evacuees from Malaya arrived in Bombay while about 250 evacuees left Bombay for Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

.... Misbehaviour of soldiers—On February 28th some British soldiers, many of whom were drunk, were involved in a disturbance in Poona Cantonment. They caused damage to shops, restaurants and cars and assaulted passersby with stones and small branches of trees. However, the police, with the help of Military pickets soon put an end to the disturbance. The damage caused is estimated between Rs.5,000 and Rs.7,000.... It is reported that the soldiers mainly concerned were due to proceed immediately on active service and that the disturbance took place suddenly without provocation, but it is alleged that they resented profiteering on the part of shopkeepers...

.... The Provost (Military Police) staff in Bombay has recently been largely increased, and in future, whenever large numbers of soldiers are allowed on shore-leave, there will be sufficient Military Police on duty to intervene immediately, if necessary. Additional pickets under responsible officers, composed of men from the units on shore-leave, will also be placed at vantage points throughout the City.

An out-of-bounds line has been drawn from the Docks along Carnac Road to the Marine Lines Station, and troops are not allowed in the City north of that line. They are, however, permitted to go along Marine Lines and up Malabar and Cumbala Hills to the Breach Candy Batha.

All drivers of public vehicles have been instructed not to take soldiers across the out-of-bounds line.

Warnings will in future be given to troops passing through the Port of Bombay before they are allowed to land on shore-leave that they must behave themselves and that if they misbehave their shore-leave will be stopped.

Orders have been issued that off-licence liquor shops should be closed for the sale of drink during the periods when large numbers of troops are on shore-leave and that the hours during which public bars are open for the supply of drinks should be curtailed.

34. Vallabhbhai Patel's Speech at Nadiad, 9 March 1942, Asking People to Be Brave and Stand United

CWSVP, Vol. 9, pp. 106–7.

The condition of government is such that one problem is solved and ten other problems crop up. People do pious deeds at the time of death and atone for the sins committed but that also does not occur in the minds of rulers. We do not want to kick those who are already fallen. That is not the way of satyagrahi. People utter name of Rama in the case of dying person, but here the dying Government is deaf. So what can be done? Its joints are breaking, not only that, its nerves are also breaking. Its energy which is still left will be used for its defence. But we have to admit that though suffering defeat after defeat it is not scared.

Now the war has come to our doorsteps. Such a huge population, one-fifth population of the world, their weapons were taken away. Since last two hundred years we have not been allowed to keep weapons. So we are also habituated to go to police station even for the minor events. But now its police stations are not going to be there.

It is possible that in such difficult times some people might take to looting. When some persons are looted should we not think that today he is looted and tomorrow my turn will be there.... So try to learn how to defend yourselves. You can't be brave if you do not shun the fear of death. No empire has such a gun, a rifled, which can kill a person whose life time is not broken. Again nobody has the power to insert life in a person whose death is imminent. Nobody has a power nor anybody can even get such a power. At present rich persons of the city are in a state of fear and are thinking whether to buy gold or land. Those who have no riches are happy because they nothing to lose, if bandits come. Now we have to forget the differences between caste and caste, religion and religion, community and community and be united and shed fear. This is not the time to sit in a shade and work. Follow the instructions of Gandhiji. Strengthen the unity in the village.

35. Popularity of Pro-Japanese Broadcasts, Widespread Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

1. The War.

Reports of Commissioners on which this report is based were drafted before the fall of Rangoon was announced, but increasing uneasiness, anxiety and nervousness are reported.... Troop movement and the stationing of increased garrisons in parts of the Province, together with other defensive measures such as the laying-out and preparation of aerodromes, have led to fairly extensive requisitioning of accommodation and in Chittagong and Comilla to

the evacuation for military purposes of areas each containing between 20 and 30 thousand inhabitants.

2. As is only natural there have been a number of rumours partly inspired by enemy radio propaganda, partly emanating from refugees and partly no doubt the invention of purely mischievous and irresponsible persons. The so-called 'Free Hindusthan' radio in Germany broadcast early in the month what purported to be a speech by Subhas Chandra Bose and may have been a record of a speech made some time ago. The notorious revolutionary Rashbehari Bose has also broadcast from Tokyo.... Rumour has anticipated the fall of Rangoon, asserted that Chittagong has been bombed, fixed a date (already past) for the bombing of Calcutta and asserted that the Japanese will simultaneously attack Chittagong, Calcutta and Madras. There have also been rumours that effective measures have been taken for the demolition of both Sealdah and Howrah railway stations and the Cossipore Gun and Shell Factory. The most insidious form of rumour continues to be exploitation of alleged racial discrimination exercised by the Japanese against Europeans in favour of Asiatics. Public reactions to news and to these rumours are illustrated by the marked disinclination in widely different parts of the Province to pay rents and to repay loans and by information (hitherto not confirmed) that there has been a stimulus to the study of Japanese and that a well-known primer of the language is now sold out.

36. From Report of Bengal PCC about Discriminatory Treatment against Evacuees, 10 April 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

Report of Shri Jibananda Bhattacharjee deputed by B.P.C.C. to inspect the Evacuees Relief Centres at Chandpore, Silchar, Chittagong and Mainpur:

1. Discrimination—On 25.3.42 such a heavy rush in Chittagong that a large number had to be shifted to Sitakundu and yet a portion of the railway platform was enclosed and reserved for a handful of Anglo Indians and Europeans and no Indian was allowed to pass by the enclosure. Some Inter class carriages were reserved for Europeans although there were no labels and Indians holding inter class tickets were not allowed to enter them in spite of the fact that other inter class carriages were overcrowded.

In Burma also it is reported that Europeans are brought by launches and boats from Kalewa and Sithoung and Mowleik and thence to Tamu on elephants, but Indians have to walk the whole distance.

From Tamu to Pallet the 'Black road' and the 'White Road' still exist. On the white road there is a bungalow every 12 miles with arrangements for refreshments, but on Black road no arrangements for even supply of drinking water.

At Imphal the Europeans are received in a camp, but the Indians are not allowed to enter the town. They are received in a camp at Kurungia six miles away, where there is no bazaar and only uncooked rice is supplied to them.

At Dimapur the evacuees have to catch the train. On 4.4.42 two big bogies with lights and bathrooms were attached to the special train for only 65 Europeans, while 1080 Indians were huddled up together in a number of bogies all of which were without lights and some of which had not even latrines.

A new road is proposed to be opened for evacuees from Bishnupur to Silchar branching off from the original route at Heiro. A hundred miles of this road runs through hill tracts mostly

uninhabited and without any arrangement for drinking water. This road must not be allowed to be opened to evacuees.

37. Opposition to Scorched Earth Policy, Nervousness amongst Labour, Food Scarcity: Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the First Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

The War—Attitude of the people

2.... the opposition to the adoption of a 'scorched earth' policy in this country. The opposition of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce to this policy has been warmly supported by the *National Herald*, though for slightly different reasons. It maintains that factories are national interests which, as the Government did not help to create, they have no right to destroy. Another very curious argument put forward is that a scorched earth policy is clearly ineffective as both China and Russia, which adopted it, were invaded! In short, the Congress attitude appears to be neither to help Government nor to do anything to hinder Japan....

The war situation and the Congress propaganda are said in some districts to have had an adverse effect on recruiting, but it is impossible yet to say to what extent the decrease in recruits at the beginning of the month was due to the *Holi* and how much to other considerations. In one or two places there is a movement of people away from the towns to the villages. In Cawnpore, though most of the men who left work ... have returned to work, labour is scarce in the city. Rumours have recently affected labour in a number of other places. In Sitapur a plywood factory is experiencing difficulty in getting men owing to a rumour that some military lorries which recently passed through had come with the object of 'press ganging' men for the Army. There was also an exodus of industrial labour from Gorakhpur on a rumour that no one was to be allowed to leave the town.

Civil Defence

.... In Allahabad certain minor Congress leaders addressed meetings attacking the A. R.P. organization, saying that it was unnecessary and was causing panic and was designed for the 'protection only of Englishmen, Government officials and the rich.' The result is said to have been that the public were less ready to obey the wardens and there were signs of active opposition, as well as of apathy, at a 'takeover' exercise held later. On the protest of the Chief Warden, the Congress somewhat altered their attitude and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing large audiences in the city, admitted that an official A.R.P. organization was necessary, but his speeches were interrupted by bursts of almost fanatical anger in which he complained of the impossibility of co-operating with such a worthless Government. A later development in Allahabad is the claim put forward by the Congress Chairman of the Municipal Board that he should be responsible for the A.R.P. organization in the city. In one or two other districts A.R.P. workers have resigned on joining the Congress organization but so far that body has attracted few volunteers....

Law and Order

6. In February, the number of dacoities jumped to 14, which is probably the highest number recorded in that month since 1918, when there was a serious outbreak of crime in the Province.

It would be natural to attribute this to the general unrest and particularly to the economic unrest, but this would not seem to account for the fact that the increase is confined practically to the Central Range and to some extent to the Southern Range. A clue may, however, be found in the fact that economic distress is less in the East and in the West of the Province than in the Centre. The former is largely rice-eating and the latter, which is wheat-eating produces more wheat than it needs for its own consumption. The question however requires further investigation. This area was giving trouble even before the recent economic crisis....

.... In a number of cases villagers turned out against dacoits and made captures. In Bara Banki, in the Central Range, seventeen *pasis* who attacked a cart laden with nuts were arrested on the spot. It is significant that none of them had a criminal record....

Supplies

8. The question of the supply of food, and in particular of wheat, to the rural population continues to be the main pre-occupation of District Magistrates, except in the rice-eating East, where the problem is not so acute. In many towns wheat has been practically unprocurable. There is little doubt that the reason is hoarding by the wealthy and the middle class. It is the poor, who cannot hoard, who have been hardest hit. In order that District Magistrates should be in a position to control existing supplies and to insure as far as possible that they are distributed to those that need them and not to hoarders, an order was made by Government prohibiting the export of wheat and certain other food grains from one district to another without the permission of the District Magistrate and in most districts orders have been passed restricting the amount of wheat that can be purchased by any one person per day....

38. Weakening of Public Morale; Wheat Shortage: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of March 1942 GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

1. The War—The fall of Rangoon and the news of further Japanese successes in Burma and Java have caused an appreciable weakening of public morale, and the familiar attendant symptoms of defeatist talk, increased susceptibility to Axis broadcasts, the spread of alarmist rumours, and a tendency to withdraw savings bank deposits and convert current into bullion are becoming gradually more apparent. As before, these symptoms are chiefly confined to the trading classes in the towns; in the villages, confidence is comparatively unimpaired, though in some cases only because the public is apathetic or ignorant....

The depression created by the war news has been enhanced by the wheat shortage, which is by now acute in nineteen districts, and which has not been alleviated by the cessation of the hartal. It has still not been possible to establish fully effective central control, and the flow of grain to importing districts is consequently sometimes impeded by the prevalence of more attractive prices elsewhere. Hoarding and the smuggling of wheat to neighbouring States for sale at enhanced rates contribute to deplete available stocks and to make the shortage more acute than it need be. Measures have now been taken to extend the requisitioning of wheat to barley, maize and other grains, which are mixed with wheat and sold in depots at controlled prices.... Meanwhile, the shortage must inevitably grow more acute until the coming harvest (fortunately still a promising one) is reaped; and the resultant distress and inconvenience in the towns, where the public are often forced to wait in queues to obtain even small quantities of adulterated flour, is beginning to claim even more attention than the war situation.

39. Growing Panic, Demoralization, Forward Bloc Activities: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of March 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

WAR—The withdrawal from Rangoon is reported still further to have shaken confidence in British ability to withstand an invasion of India. There is general skepticism about publicity emanating from Government and war Committee sources regarding strategic possibilities and the defence of India. All kinds of rumour and speculation are afloat. One District Officer reports 'The reverses in the Far East are having a very depressing effect and people are growing very panicky now. Some of the evacuees from Burma who have come here have given harrowing tales of what is happening in Burma. People going to Calcutta have also brought back similar tales. There is now a very great danger of the people getting demoralized and the broadcasts from Germany and Japan help to aggravate the panic. People of the Subhas Bose group and the Forward Bloc are looking forward to creating chaos in the country. This inference is drawn from the prominence which has been given by the German Radio to the speech of Mr. Subhas Bose recently broadcast from some unknown station that as soon as the Japanese land in India an independence Indian Government (Azad Hindustan) will be declared by the Subhas Bose group. From conversations with the groups connected with the Forward Bloc it appears that they are looking forward to para-troops from Japan dropping arms to the people who would go over to the Bose group. The terrorists are likely to do propaganda for this. The Gandhi group in spite of its professions of sympathy towards China is looking forward to doing nothing. They also find that the ground is now slipping from under their feet. The general mass of people in the villages remains apathetic except for talking and the loyalists feel bewildered. Sheelbhadra Yajee and Mathura Prasad Misra have been sedulously publishing that the Japanese have no quarrel with India and that even if they occupy the country, Asiatic domination is preferable to British.... Absurd stories were current after the recent departure of the British regiment stationed at Dinapur that several soldiers had deserted and others concealed themselves in trees rather than go to the front. Rumours were also afloat in North Bhagalpur that two troop trains on the Bengal and North Western Railway had had to be cancelled because the sepoy refused to go to the war. Three constables of Dhanbad are reported to have been affected by the general atmosphere of war uneasiness and to have resigned.'

.... 4. LABOUR—Labour in Jamshedpur is in a state of acute uneasiness. Factors contributing to this are the recent influx of troops and the defence measures taken by them, which has led to the fear that the town will soon be in the front line. The persistent impression is that following the 'scorched earth' policy, the Jamshedpur works will be blown up. There is also discontent over shortage of foodstuffs, particularly wheat. Unrest has manifested itself in stay-in strikes and demonstrations in some of the departments in TISCO. The exodus from the town still continues and shortage of labour has increased. ... Another rumour is that the Company, through chosen agents—such as Homi and John, both having been bought over—is fomenting discontent and encouraging workmen to depart in order that the works may close down and be saved from demolition. Several meetings of the Tata Workers's Union have been held under the presidentship of M, John. General criticism of British rule in India, the inadequacy of defence measures to prevent looting and arson during air raids were among the principal points mentioned in the speeches of John and Narayan Chandra Mukherji.... At Jamalpur a panic was caused on the 15th by the arrival of troops and the staging of an A.R.P. rehearsal,

with the result that 1500 workers absented themselves from their duty on the next day under the impression that an air raid was imminent.

40. Setting Up of Refugee Camps in Towns, Rowdiness of Troops, Withdrawals from Banks: Extracts from the Fortnightly Report for the CP and Berar for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

The War—Some slight improvement in the general public morale took place in the fortnight under review. The circulation of alarmist and defeatist rumours is on the decrease as a result of widespread counter propaganda and effective action against known rumour-mongers. A few were prosecuted for causing fear and alarm, and others were warned....

Early in the fortnight, there was some agitation regarding (a) discrimination in the treatment of evacuees and (b) rowdiness of troops. About a hundred Anglo-Burman and Anglo-Indian evacuees have arrived in Nagpur from Calcutta and are being looked after by the Evacuation Relief Committee Nagpur and the Women Volunteer Service.... Refugee camps in Raipur, Bilaspur, and Chanda for the temporary accommodation of refugees, who may pass through these towns, are nearing completion....

A troop of orderlies of an Indian Hospital Corps visited a bazaar in Nagpur when their train was halted at Nagpur station a few days ago. An altercation, followed by a fight, took place between those soldiers and some of the people in the locality and three of the soldiers were injured necessitating hospital treatment. Inquiries are in progress....

Withdrawals from the Savings Bank and encashment of cash certificates during the period from the 8th to the 28th March 1942 exceeded deposits and purchases respectively by Rs.3,74,116 and Rs.2,56,973....

41. Troop Movements in Assam: Excerpt from Report of Assam Provincial Congress Committee, 12 March 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

.... War: Dibrugarh, Tinsukhia and Digboi have been declared emergency areas. Even in Gauhati meetings have been banned under Rs. 56 of the Defence of India Rules. Troops and military supplies are almost daily being sent through Assam. India-Burma [road] through Manipur is under construction. Motor vehicles with drivers are being gradually commandeered for military use. Evacuees including Europeans from Burma are being brought down. All this has created panic.

42. 'Extravagant' Rumours: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

1. The War. The tempo of war activities has been rapidly increasing, and the district officers report that the manifold additional duties which have fallen upon them are interfering with such matters as organization of war fund collections. The general population has been little

affected save by the circulation of rumours which grow continually more and more extravagant. These rumours usually have some modicum of fact as a basis but are amazingly distorted in transmission. For instance, the re-organization of military affairs, which has caused discussion led to stories that General Wavell is about to take up his Headquarters at Cinnemara near Jorhat, and that His Excellency the Governor is removing to a Zemindar's house in Goalpara. The news that a small number of army camels had arrived at Manipur road has obtained wide currency in the form that lorry loads of vultures and jackals are being sent up the Manipur road in order to dispose of corpses. The suggestion is that a relation can be traced between vultures and camels because both have long necks. The action of a person in the Kamrup district posing as a recruiting officer and of a constable who indiscreetly took chest measurements of certain persons has resulted in a widespread rumour that Government contemplate conscription. The tension which enables gossip to travel so far and so fast is kept up partly by the frequency with which aeroplanes are now seen in many places and still more by the difficulties effecting distribution of produce.

While the population as a whole is undisturbed, there has been a noticeable increase in the numbers of Marwaris and other persons domiciled in other parts of India to leave Assam. In some bases the wholesale departure of menials has caused inconvenience....

The number of refugees from Burma who had passed through between the 1st February and 28th of March was 26,186. Organization has been a laborious business, making heavy calls on the energy of all concerned.... The problem that has always been present and has now reached an acute stage is that of supply, particularly because of dislocation of the railway due to the great strain that is now being thrown upon it....

.... 4. Labour. On certain gardens in the Sylhet district a call for labour for military road projects led to an attack on the Manager and a strike.... At Digboi the management has addressed itself as circumspectly as possible to the very difficult problem created by tenders of resignation.... There is some reason to think that the anxieties of labour on oilfields would be relieved if they could have a clear indication that there is no danger to labour of being thrown out of employment owing to enemy occupation of the fields or destruction of the refinery. This attitude is doubtless due to the fact that popular imagination runs far ahead of strategic preparations.

.... 7. General. The transport difficulties have led to acute shortages of imported produce such as atta, flour, sugar and dal. Railway dislocation has been aggravated by the actions of other provinces and their district officers in impeding the movement of supplies. It has been found necessary in consequence to restrict the movement of export of rice and paddy down stream from Goalpara and Kamrup districts. The mass movement on the part of Marwari traders, owing to their doubts whether transactions except on a cash basis will be ultimately profitable, has led to grave restriction of trade. In Shillong the bazaars have combined to insist upon cash payment.... Even in Sylhet, where transport difficulties have been unimportant, prices are stated to be soaring.



43. Improvement in Public Morale Because of Cripps Talks: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the North-West Frontier Province for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

1. The War—The lull in the fighting in Burma and the Far East, and the diversion caused by Sir Stafford Cripps' Mission have helped public morale to steady itself. There have been fewer rumours of the kind that owe their origin to Axis Radio propaganda, although one, to the effect that Burmese and Indian troops have deserted and joined the Japanese, has become particularly persistent. Some doubt has arisen about the attitude of Turkey, which is watched with the closest attention in this Province, and there seems to be a feeling in some quarters that Turkish opinion is less favourably inclined to the Allies than before.

The progress of the talks in Delhi between Sir Stafford Cripps and the leaders of the various political parties has been followed with interest by all sections ...

44. Government Indifference to Refugee Problem, Requisitioning of Boats Affecting Fishermen, Attempts at Scorched Earth Policy: Report of Utkal Provincial Congress Committee, Not Dated
AICC Papers, F. No. P-20/1942-6, NMML.

Unemployment: Refugees are coming from Burma, Malaya and Ceylon who used to remit annually Rs 50 lacs to Orissa but now they have to be found employment. Government has done nothing for them.

Boats used for river traffic and sea fishing have been seized and several of them have been destroyed. This has thrown hundreds of fishermen families out of employment and it is also a serious handicap to the movement of food articles from one place to another.

Disposal of foodstuffs: Government are advising people in the four coastal districts to dispose off their foodstuffs just keeping sufficient for themselves. The rich people in villages and mill owners in towns will dispose off the food grains and in spite of failure of crops Orissa has been declared to be a surplus food province. So the food grains will be reported [*sic*] out of the Province and there will be nothing left to keep the agriculturists in the sowing season. So more lands will remain fallow and the food problem will permanently deteriorate.

Military Problem: It is apprehended that if Japanese land in India at all they are sure to do so between Chandipur and Chandabali because Chandpore is within 100 miles of Tatanagore 50 miles of Calcutta and is the best testing station for war materials. Blackout restrictions are also very strictly enforced in the remotest villages and there is every likelihood of heavy evacuation taking place from the coastal areas. Large troop movements are taking place.... In case of landing there will be difficulty of dividing districts into enemy occupied and British areas and also question of contact and directions.



45. Apprehension, Popularity of Enemy Radio Broadcasts: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the Second Half of March 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

1. War. A feeling of apprehension continues among the people, though some persuade themselves that Japan will move against Australia rather than India. Nevertheless, there are indications that the anxiety concerning India's Eastern border is resulting in greater willingness on the part of the general public to co-operate in Government's efforts to defend themselves and the country, in some cases to a degree which has caused some surprise to those who have observed it; while alarmist rumours are not nearly as numerous as formerly.

A certain amount of evacuation is proceeding from the coastal towns including Cuttack and people are sending away their families from such towns to safer places in the mufassil. It is reported that the process has been accelerated since the recent issue of Government orders granting advances to Government servants to remove their families from threatened areas, and it is likely that the decision of the Provincial Government to shift the staff and records of the Secretariat and Heads of Departments from Cuttack to Sambalpur, as a precautionary measure, and the posting of military in some places and the news this morning of the occupation of Akyab would still further tend to increase evacuation from the threatened areas. Many of the population are still frightened of their own troops and some alarm is said to have been spread by the news of the arrival of more troops in the Province.

.... An evacuee from Burma who recently returned to his home is said to have hoisted a Congress flag over his house explaining that he learnt in Rangoon that this symbol insures immunity against Japanese air attacks and has advised others to do so as an indication of their political sympathies. This is being investigated by the police.

Some reports state that the public now pay closer attention to broadcasts from Tokyo and Berlin than to those from England and India.

46. Civic Defence Committee, Food Shortage, Discussion in the Press on the Scorched Earth Policy: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the Second Half of March 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

Great interest is being taken in A.R.P. matters and a Civic Defence Committee has been formed in Karachi, including representatives of the Congress, the Muslim League and other organizations. The Managing Committee consists of fifteen members. Mr. M.H. Gazdar, M.L.A., Mayor of Karachi, is the Chairman. The Committee has not yet defined its functions or programme, but it will be allowed to organize volunteers so long as there is no attempt to run a parallel A.R.P. organization.

3. The figures of Savings Bank withdrawals in Sind show that in the recent months the rush was largest in the fourth week of February when the net Savings Bank withdrawals amounted to Rs. 2,09,237 as compared to the withdrawals of Rs. 6,528 in the corresponding week in the year 1941. There has been a gradual decrease in withdrawals since then....

.... There have been complaints of shortage of wheat stocks but there is no reason to believe that the stock in this province is insufficient for its needs. The situation is particularly bad in Jacobabad where the Panchayat opened a shop and have been selling 110 maunds of flour

daily. Government have issued orders under the Defence of India Rules requiring every dealer in wheat, juari, bajri, cotton seed, charcoal, country rice and Burma rice within the limits of Karachi to furnish on every Tuesday beginning with March 31st to the Chief Controller of Prices at Karachi a full and correct statement of the stocks of such articles held by him on his account or on account of any pension in connection with his business....

The Press

.... Some papers have published leaders on the 'scorched earth' policy. The '*Hindu*' endorsed the views expressed by Mahatma Gandhi against the scorched earth policy in India and stated that the policy if pursued will be suicidal to Indian industries which are still in their infancy and also result in acute unemployment. The '*Sansar Samachar*' wrote in the same strain. The '*Hayat*', a Muslim daily, while commenting on the scorched earth policy remarked that the opposition to the scorched earth policy came from the capitalists who had already grown fat on the earnings made possible owing to the conditions of war.

47. Nervousness in Delhi and 'Kuchabandi'; Strong Feeling against 'Scorched Earth': Extracts from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

The War—During the last ten days there has been a serious loss of public confidence. A spate of political meetings is not unusual in Delhi at this season, when the session of the Legislative Assembly draws to a close and the popular members experience a craving to let off steam; but the number of meetings during the last few days has been above the normal, and the speeches decidedly worse than usual. For example, in a meeting held in the Queen's Gardens on the 30th March under the presidentship of Mr. Satya Narain Sinha, an M.L.A. of Bihar, the Congressman Mr. Satyamurti, M.L.A. referred derisively to the withdrawal of the British according to plan from Hong Kong, Penang and Singapore, a reference which was greeted by the large audience with laughter and clapping. Another Bihar legislator, Chaudhri Ram Narain Singh, presided over a meeting in the Mehrauli police station area on the 29th March in which the generals of the British army were taunted with knowing only how to retreat....

Some stories have been going about in the city of persons being kidnapped at night either to serve as recruits in the army or to have their blood drawn for transfusion....

During the last few weeks a number of applications have been received in the Delhi municipal office for permission to erect gates at the entrance to alleys in the City, closing them to the general public. A desire for such a closure of city alleys (kuchabandi) is a well known symptom of public nervousness in the towns of northern India.

An interesting feature of the situation is the strong feeling which has been aroused on the subject of 'scorched earth'. Even old fashioned Hindu bankers and merchants are up in arms on this issue.

As the date for the cutting of the new harvest approaches, the wheat situation tends to become easier, but the supplies coming in are still only a fraction of the normal consumption....



48. Popularity of Enemy Radio Broadcasts: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Baluchistan for the Second Half of March 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/3/42, NAI.

1. The War—There is still considerable nervousness about the course of the war in Burma and the Far East, with the result that Quetta particularly has produced more than its usual crop of rumours, some of which appear to have emanated from enemy broadcasts. The most dangerous rumour which has come to notice is with regard to Turkey's attitude, suggesting that she is about to join the Axis against Russia and Great Britain.... Action has been taken in Chaman to prevent private wireless sets from being used for the dissemination of such rumours in Afghanistan. Reports have also been received that Ghilzai money-lenders returning particularly from Ceylon and Eastern India have been spreading rumours after their return through Baluchistan to Afghanistan to the effect that arrangements for defence are inadequate and that discrimination is being shown in favour of European evacuees. It appears that these money-lenders have been forced to depart without collecting their debts or salvaging their property, which has caused them considerable personal annoyance. The organization of a National War Front in this province has been somewhat delayed by the difficulty of securing a suitable provincial leader and also of sparing an official to assist in the organization. There is however, considerable public enthusiasm particularly among the tribal elements for this form of war effort and His Highness the Khan of Kalat is showing a keen personal interest in the movement.

49. Women Should Be Encouraged to Be More Brave and Self-reliant:
AICC Circular No. 7, Dated 6 March 1942, to All Provincial
Congress Committees

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

You must have read Gandhiji's leading article in the last issue of Harijan dated March 1st under the caption 'Criminal Assaults' dealing with the danger of women being molested by soldiers. Gandhiji has advised our sisters to be fearless and self reliant. This advice has come none too early.

Whenever there is danger to women's honour the tendency in our country is to segregate them or to remove them to places of safety. This under the present circumstances is scarcely a remedy. The danger is daily increasing and very soon there may be no place [of] safety any where. If for any reasons those in authority now are unable to check soldiers from molesting women, the position will be much worse, when unfortunately there is an invasion from outside. Moreover segregation is no remedy. It is likely to make our women more timid and helpless than they already are.

The only way therefore is to ask them to be brave and self reliant. This can best be done by organizing them. They may be invited to participate fully in the present programme of the congress. Fortunately our programme is such that in working it there can be no difference between men and women. It can be carried out as efficiently by men as by women.

Congress Committees are, therefore, requested to progressively associate more and more women with their activities. This may be done by creating in the provinces, where they do

not already exist, women's departments or appointing women organizers. The work of these departments and organizers will not be different from the general congress work. It must also be carried on under the general supervision and direction of the Congress Committees but the special charge of the Women's Department or Organisers will be to approach women, to induce them to take interest in congress work and generally to organize them.... They must fully participate both in the programme of national self sufficiency and self-protection. They must have a volunteer organization of their own. This is the only effective way of making them fearless and self reliant....

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

50. Work for Women in the Emergency Period: Letter from Secretary, Women's Department, AICC, to Secretary, Women's Department, PCCs, Not Dated

AICC Papers, F. No. WD 9/1940-1, NMML.

Dear Friend,

With the approach of war nearer India, new problems are arising every day. It is becoming increasingly difficult to lead normal lives and carry on normal activities ... I have been approached by women from several provinces to suggest ways and means to meet the present difficulties.... The following are some of the suggestions for organizing women.

1) The problem of panic

A vast majority of them being illiterate, women are prone to believe false and fantastic rumours afloat ... Nervous and panic stricken [*sid*] women upset the whole household. The [*sid*] destroy the morale. Therefore it is essential to arrange for the spread of correct information ... This can best be done by holding at regular intervals, mohalla meetings of women where they should be given correct available information.

2) Volunteer Corp

A strong volunteer corp of women should be organized. The [*sid*] should be taught simple drill, first aid, the art of self protection in an emergency etc.

3) Committees

.... (c) Arrange to teach spinning to the mohalla women.

(d) Arrange lectures on useful general information.

(e) Organize a short course of physical culture with special emphasis on how to ward off personal assaults.

(f) Find out cases of assaults and oppression on women, explain to the victims that such incidents are not to be kept secret under false ideas of modesty and honour, give publicity to such incidents and render help in bringing the criminals to book be they civil or military.

(g) Keep in touch with men volunteer corp to be able to ask for assistance in an emergency.

4) Problem of grain shortage

Through the mohalla committees women must be given information about different substitutes when one kind of grain is running short. They must be warned against evils of individual hoarding.

5) Problem of clothing

The shortage of clothing which may come in the near future, has to be tackled now ... The mohalla Committees should make arrangements to teach carding, spinning, sliver making. It can arrange to supply Charkhas and cotton, take the yarn spun and arrange for the weaving of cloth. Unemployed local workers are found everywhere today. These can be set up in their trade again by means of the yarn supplied by the women's committees.

51. Statement Issued by a Body of Women in Calcutta, 28 March 1942

IAR, 1942, Part 1, pp. 61–2.

A statement was issued by a body of women, representative of young women's organizations in Calcutta: 'Today when our land is threatened with foreign invasion, when our homes, our children, our loved ones, everything in fact we hold dear, is on the verge of complete destruction, when Fascist Imperialism—the worst form of all exploitation and terror—is seeking to crush forever the elements of freedom and civilization we have won through years of hard struggle, are we to sit by and watch this gigantic cataclysm as mere spectators?'

52. Export of Foodgrains and Other Factors Contributing to Scarcity

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 26 March 1942.

Planned Food Policy

Towards the end of the last World war, if we remember aright, India experienced a grave scarcity of food. The Government of Lord Chelmsford became sorely perplexed and did not know how to solve the problem. An inquiry promptly institute at the time revealed that it was the huge exports of food grains during the war that had brought her almost to the brink of starvation. Fortunately, the war ended and thereby India was saved from a catastrophe. If the war had continued some time longer, Heaven only knows what would have happened to India's teeming population.

Are we going to have similar tragic experiences during this war also? There has been a loud and insistent clamour about an acute wheat shortage from many parts of Upper India. Do not these popular outcries reach the ears of the Delhi authorities? Has the present scarcity of food grains been brought about by the same causes as during the last Great War? People do not know anything about all this and the Government too, have not so far cared to enlighten them. Does it behove them still to continue to follow a sealed-lip policy?

The wheat question was raised both in the Council of State and in the Central Assembly. In the Upper House, Sir Alan Lloyd, beyond giving the usual mealy-mouthed assurances, could throw no light on the 'unfortunate state of affairs' caused by wheat shortage. What is still more amazing is that Sir Alan 'was not in a position to give figures of Army purchases exported' but he informed the House that 'the exports were mainly for consumption by Indian soldiers

abroad'. Fancy, the Commerce Secretary not knowing the figures of wheat exports meant for the Army! A sad confession indeed!

In the Central Assembly, however, Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Commerce Member, was in a somewhat revealing mood but there also he could not definitely say as to how the wheat shortage had been brought about. We learn from his statement that the production of wheat in 1940–1 was a little over a million tons. He said that 260,000 tons of wheat and wheat flour have been exported by sea to all countries during the first ten months of the year. He also vouchsafed the information that Government had purchased 203,000 tons of wheat for the Defence forces in the country. Curiously enough, although the Commerce Member could not say what the actual consumption of wheat was in the country, he expressed the view that huge stocks had gone underground.... Has the Commerce Department taken any steps to stop hoarding of wheat and, if so, what has been the result?

When the Commerce Member allowed wheat to be exported, was he quite sure that this would not affect the home requirements? The report is also current that the Indian States have been asked to supply a million tons of wheat and *bajra* to the Government of India through the Political Department. Is this a fact? If so, what will the Government do with these commodities? It is pertinent to observe in this connection that Indian consumes practically the entire quantity of wheat she produces. In that case, shall we be far wrong if we say that heavy exports of wheat might seriously interfere with the needs of the civil population?...

53. M.K. Gandhi on the Desirability of Exodus from Cities, Sevagram, 10 March 1942

CWMG, Vol. 75, p. 401.

A correspondent asks for my detailed views on the exodus that I have advised from the cities of all who are not wanted there and all who are unfit or unwilling to stay there. No one is obliged to stay in against his will. In the event of bombardment, it is clear that non-combatants can only be a burden in every way. Successful defence against a powerful enemy requires exclusive concentration on holding the enemy at bay. The defenders' attention must not be divided. This is from the military point of view.

But we have war-resisters too, either humanitarian or political. They may not stay unless their object is merely to cause embarrassment for the sake of it. I hope there are none such. They should, therefore, be out of the cities. Then there are those who do not know what to do in the event of bombardment. They should all evacuate. As the reader will see, my opinion has little to do with my war-resistance. For in this case and up to a point military necessity and duty of war-resisters demand the same action. If I could convert any city or all cities wholly, including the combatants of yesterday, I should welcome the invading host and try to convert even them or challenge them to do their worst, without offering retaliation. But no such good luck awaits me. If the cities were converted, all India including the rulers would be converted and there would be peace in India and peace in the world. But that must remain a day-dream yet awhile. Only I won't be moved from my position by being told that the Jap or the Nazi is not the same man as the Englishman. I draw no such fundamental distinction between man and man. But I must not detain the reader on the speculative side of the matter-of-fact question that faces us.

Assuming then that all who should or a part of them have evacuated the cities and have gone to the villages or are about to go, what should they do? They must go with the village mind to live the village life as much as possible. They may not reproduce city conditions and build temporary palaces. They should go to villages in a spirit of service, study their economic and other conditions, and ameliorate them not by giving alms but by giving the villagers work of a permanent nature. In other words, they should work the constructive programme among the villagers. Thus they will identify themselves with the villagers and become a kind of co-operative society with an ordered programme of economic, social, hygienic and political reconstruction.

The greatest problem the new-comers will have to tackle will be to deal with loot and dacoities. It will tax their resources to the utmost. The non-violent way is there. If that is not clear to them, with the co-operation of the villagers they should organize themselves for armed defence against robbers and dacoits. We have too long looked to the Government to do this elementary work for us, not excluding even the reclamation of castes called criminal tribes. The Government cannot do much, if anything at all, in this critical time. The work has perforce to be done by the evacuees violently, non-violently, or both ways.

54. Wardha CWC Resolution on Refugees and Evacuees:
From Summary of Proceedings of the CWC, Wardha,
17–18 March 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. G-32/1942, NMML.

Refugees and Evacuees

The problem created by the constant stream of refugees and evacuees was a difficult one. The president and the A.I.C.C. office have been receiving letters from Bengal and Assam asking for relief. The committee was of opinion that the Congress could not render any financial help. The non-official agencies already working in the field must be assisted by the local provincial organizations who could raise money if they could.

Scorched Earth Policy

The attention of the Committee was drawn to the possibility of the Government adopting a scorched earth policy in the case of invasion. Some of the members expressed opposition to the scorched earth policy; others while admitting that the present irresponsible government might grossly abuse it could not altogether rule it out of consideration if circumstances changed and there was a National Government. The Committee took no decision on the subject.

Evacuation

Members of the Committee individually expressed their opinion on the subject. The opinions were not identical. The common measure of agreement that emerged from the discussion was as follows:

We should neither encourage nor impede evacuations. The tendency to run away is there, we should not encourage it. We should neither discourage it because it is good that people evacuate slowly else there will be rush and confusion at critical times.

55. M.K. Gandhi on 'Scorched Earth', Sevagram

CWMG, Vol. 75, pp. 409–10.

The Russian technique of scorched earth has staggered humanity, but humanity has been powerless to do anything except applaud the amazing sacrifice and bravery that counted no cost too great to circumvent the enemy. I have shared the amazement with the admirers but not their admiration.

We like to imitate what we admire. Now that the prospect faces us, are we able to contemplate with equanimity, or feel the glow of bravery and sacrifice at the prospect of India's earth being scorched and everything destroyed in order that the enemy's march may be hampered?

As a war-resister my answer can only be one. I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence of defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy—that is, out of a humanitarian motive.

But in India's case there is, too, a practical consideration. Unlike Russia's, India's masses have no national instinct developed in the sense that Russia's have. India is not fighting. Her conquerors are.

Supposing that the conquerors are worsted and the Japanese come, the inarticulate masses will not even notice the change for the time being or for a long time. The intelligentsia are divided on the issue of the war. The motive here is irrelevant. India's soldiers are in no sense a national army. They are soldiers because it is their profession. They will as soon fight under the Japanese or any other provided they are paid for fighting. In these circumstances the policy of scorched earth would be a wholly indefensible act.

It is therefore a matter for satisfaction that Indian opinion is being expressed against the policy of scorching. I know nothing of the requirements of the military, but they can never be allowed to supersede national or humanitarian considerations which the nation may have accepted. The military must thus be an arm of the dominant civil power, not its substitute. The Government of India will considerably ease the situation and allay anxiety by declaring in unequivocal terms that they will not apply, if the occasion ever arise, the scorched earth policy to India, especially regard being had to her peculiar position.

56. Need for Self-protection and Self-sufficiency: AICC Circular No. 8,
Dated 24 March 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

To All Provincial Congress Committees

Dear friend,

The Working Committee which met in Wardha on March 17 considered the reports of the working of the constructive programme received from provinces. The reports revealed that while the work was making steady progress in some provinces no serious beginnings were yet made in others. Constructive programme being the only programme before congressmen to-day, the strength and efficiency of our organization will be judged by the extent to which congress

committees are able to mobilize their resources for carrying it out. A heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who are guiding and controlling affairs in the provinces. Things happen or are made to happen in the country which tend to distract our attention from our task but we must be on our guard.

The programme placed by the A.I.C.C. before the country, is two-fold: (1) self-protection and (2) self-sufficiency. Fairly detailed instructions with regard to both have been issued by this office. It is now up to you to act and supplement and amplify them to meet the local requirements....

Self-protection has a double aspect: (i) protection for air raids and (ii) protection from internal disorder. Government and semi-government agencies are at work for organizing protection against possible air raids. It is common knowledge that in spite of considerable expenditure government efforts lack popular appeal and support. The results achieved therefore bear little relation to the effort and money spent. For this and other reasons congressmen cannot associate themselves with government controlled bodies. But it would be folly to impede their effort unless what they do is against the A.I.C.C. instructions. The instructions that the official A.R.P. organizations broadcast to the people should be studied and such of them as are sound and reasonable should be commended to the people for adoption. These instructions may be added to by the local congress committees according to the needs of the local situation.

The congress has for the last two months been carrying on propaganda against fear and panic with considerable effort. Naturally the panic is greatest in areas which are in danger by Sea and Air. The situation in these areas has to be closely and constantly studied by local congressmen and advice given to people. The problem of evacuation must be carefully considered. As pointed out by Gandhiji the military authorities would not like at critical times to be encumbered with the problems of such of the civil population as is not needed in a particular locality. Therefore those whose everyday business does not require them to be in cities that are liable to attack from air and sea and those who are afraid, should leave such localities without creating confusion and panic. Before they leave they must make sure that they will not create problems for themselves and for those with whom they take refuge. There is time enough for regulated evacuation. Afterwards when actual bombing takes place, if the timid and those not wanted begin evacuation in a hurry they will create problems as in other countries of which we are familiar through the papers.

As to protection from internal civil disorder, we have already issued necessary instructions. The volunteer organization that we contemplated for meeting the needs of the present situation is broad-based. Our previous volunteer organizations were subject to many rules and a fairly severe disciplinary code and were confined to congressmen. This time we have thrown open the doors of the organization to all our countrymen irrespective of political affiliations, the only condition being adherence to peaceful methods. Maintenance of peace and security is the chief aim of the volunteer organization.... We are happy to note that the response to congress call in this direction has been ample and spontaneous. The drive therefore to enlist members of all communities and all political parties for the volunteer organization should be further intensified. The organization should be split up into units of ten or twenty, each in charge of a mohalla in the city or of a village or part thereof in rural areas. The units should mainly confine themselves to the service and protection of their respective localities. They should be in constant touch with the people. They should try to serve them in every way. They should help in organizing mohalla meetings and otherwise carrying on the constructive programme.

Their chief duty, of course, will be the maintenance of peace in the mohalla, prevention of disorder, and in the event of any disorder breaking out, protecting the people....

The programme of self-sufficiency has been explained time and again by Gandhiji. Each passing day emphasized the urgency of carrying out this programme with speed and thoroughness. Conditions approaching starvation and nakedness exist already in large parts of the country. Semi-nakedness, semi-starvation and unemployment have been the lot of many for a long time past. But with the war lengthening out, many more have been thrown out of work and the earnings of many others have considerably diminished. Conditions will go on progressively deteriorating. The new taxation imposed by the central and provincial governments have added to the already great misery of the masses and hit hard the lower middle classes. Therefore if the situation is not controlled it will lead to all manner of highly undesirable consequences. It can be controlled only by the programme of 'self-sufficiency'. Many items in the programme require technical ability. Happily we have organizations carrying on this work for the past many years. They are technically equipped for the tasks they have undertaken. The All India Spinner's Association and the All India Village Industries Association may be drawn upon for whatever technical advice and assistance is needed.... I hope you have carried out the suggestion of my previous circulars that provincial secretaries of the A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A., Harijan Sevak Sangh, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, and the Women's Department should be associated with your provincial executive. This should greatly facilitate mutual cooperation.

There is a great paucity of trained workers in Khadi village industry and village work. The best thing under the circumstances for you will be to send some intelligent young men to Wardha to join the institutions started by the A.I.V.I.A. and the A.I.S.A. for training workers. The expenses at Wardha for a student do not exceed 15 Rs per month, all told. The A.I.V.I.A. secretary, Sri Kumarappa has assured us that he will be willing to accept responsibility for the training of all those who are sent to the central institution of the association at Wardha.... The expenses of course will have to be met by the P.C.C. sending out workers for training....

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

57. Speech by Chaudhri Ram Narain Singh, MLA, Central, at a Meeting on Church Mission Road, Delhi City, on 29 March 1942, about the Scorched Earth Policy
GOI Home Political File No. 73/42, NAI.

.... The world is changing. For how long would our slavery continue? Some of the Governments have adopted the scorched earth policy, that is they destroy their cities at the time when they see that further resistance would be useless. A newspaper of this country has said that no one approves of this policy here in India. Do you like this scorched earth policy? (The audience answered: This is not a scheme fit for human beings, it is suited to devils.)

The Statesman is wrong when it approves of this policy. Russia's case is quite different. If the policy is adopted here the people will revolt against the Government, and the consequences will be bad. Everyone should think it his duty to oppose that policy.

58. Japanese Bombings in Cocanada and Vizagapatnam: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Madras for the First Half of April 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

On the 5th of April news was received of the bombing of Colombo which indicated that the war was coming very much closer to India. On the 6th of April a small force of Japanese aircraft attacked Cocanada and Vizagapatnam. At Cocanada the first attack took place in the early morning when a ship belonging to the Coromandel Company and the Company's launch were approaching Cocanada's roadstead. Only one enemy aircraft was engaged in this particular raid, and it machine gunned the ship and the launch. A Serang of the Launch was killed and the wireless operator was injured. About a quarter to two in the afternoon an aircraft bombed the oil installations at Cocanada and 10 or 12 bombs were dropped. Nearly all of them fell in what may be described as the target area but only one scored a really direct hit on an oil tank but as this was fortunately empty no grave damage resulted. One other tank was struck by a glancing blow and damage was caused to the superstructure but the tank itself was not pierced. There was a further alert at Cocanada that evening from quarter past four to quarter past five but no bombs were dropped. At Vizagapatnam the attacks were rather more serious. In the morning ships approaching the harbour were attacked and then in the afternoon at half past one and about five o'clock there were two raids which were entirely confined to the port area. About 10 planes were used on each occasion and some 20 bombs were dropped. There was only slight damage to the port workshops but unfortunately one bomb scored a direct hit on a shelter and this accounted for the relatively high figure of casualties which numbered 5 killed and about 40 injured. A ship with 350 tons of high explosive and ammunition was lying in the harbour at the time but though there were several near misses it fortunately was not struck.

The immediate reaction among the general public to these raids was evacuation from the town in large numbers but the evacuation seems to have been on a much smaller scale in Cocanada than in Vizagapatnam, and the return of those who left was correspondingly more rapid.... In Cocanada essential services continue to function and no difficulties were experienced over food but in Vizagapatnam matters are very much worse. The railways were practically paralysed and all the subordinate staff and labour fled from the place; trains had to be operated as best as could be done by the few senior staff who had remained. All provision shops were closed and practically everyone deserted the town; the Port labour fled and so did the coolies employed on the construction of the new aerodrome. For a day or two there was an acute food shortage in the town and the District Magistrate had to order the police forcibly to open certain shops and run them, while Government at his request made special arrangements for provisions to be sent by Messrs. Spencer & Co. direct from Madras to their branch at Waltair. Even the police were not completely untouched by the 'panic'. It appears that men of the Special Emergency Force at Vizianagaram were on guard duty at exposed points in the Hawa harbour when the raid occurred. They are said to have left their posts and come to shelter when the raid began and some of them who were in the shelter were hit. As a result of this after the raid was over 12 of the Special Emergency Force and 6 men from the District Armed Reserve absconded and have not so far been traced. The District Magistrates at both these places made the same complaint that the warning system failed to give adequate warning of the approach of the aircraft and that almost the first warning that any one heard of what was happening was the dropping of bombs. According to the latest reports received

from the District Magistrate of Cocanada, life in that town is comparatively normal again, but in Vizagapatnam there are still very few people in the town and practically no labour.

At 4.30 A.M. on April 7th an air raid warning was sounded in Madras City. The all clear was sounded just before 6 o'clock and no bombs were dropped. On the 11th April the Government were advised by the local Military Commanders that intelligence had been received which made it appear that an invasion in force by the Japanese was likely to take place within a few days somewhere on the east coast of India at some point south of Masulipatam. The Government therefore decided that all Government offices which could be evacuated from Madras should be dispersed to towns further inland at once and they also issued a Communique to the general public advising all those whose presence were considered not essential to leave the City as soon as possible. The Government offices were closed from Sunday April the 12th and ordered to reopen a week later in the place to which they have been ordered to move. Even before this some portions of the less essential staff of the Secretariat had been sent away to Ootacamund and the remainder were due to go shortly. This move was put into immediate operation and arrangements were made to transfer all essential staff who would have otherwise stayed at Madras to Madanapalle and Chittoor. Other offices were also packed up and began to move off to their various new headquarters as rapidly as possible. The High Court has gone to Coimbatore, the Inspector General of Police to Vellore, the Board of Revenue to Salem and other departments to the various headquarters towns in the interior. The Governor and his Advisers, the Chief Secretary and other Secretaries with skeleton staffs continue to work at Fort St. George.

... [I]t is estimated that in the six days prior to and including the 14th of April some two lakhs of people left the City.... people seemed to be able to make their own arrangements, pay their railway fares and go to places of their own choosing rather than to the camps selected by Government, although the names and situations of these camps were given wide publicity at the same time as the Communique was published.... The chief repercussion in Madras City itself is the difficulty over food. Hotels and markets have largely closed and people who remain in the city are experiencing some difficulty in obtaining food and supplies....

In accordance with the orders issued by the local Naval and Military authorities the port of Madras has to all intents and purposes been closed. Ships can still enter and leave the harbour but practically no facilities are available for loading and unloading.... Even on the West coast there has been a tendency towards evacuation from the coastal towns into the interior. The District Magistrate of Malabar reports that there is a noticeable feeling that if it came to the worst the Japanese are not bad people after all and the District magistrate is organizing the Propaganda Sub Committee to combat this attitude.

59. Madras Exodus

The National Herald, 14 April 1942.

The increasing rush of people from Madras City continues unabated. The rush of passengers is considerably increased following the Government notification advising non-essential people to leave Madras as 'the danger threatening Madras is now more serious' and the early closing of the High Court and other courts for the summer vacation.

Four special trains were run yesterday from Egmore and two from the central station in addition to the usual mails and passenger trains....

60. Civil Defence of Juhu: Appeal for Funds

The Bombay Chronicle, 1 April 1942.

Miss Usha Setalvad, President, Jan Seva Mandal, Juhu has issued the following appeal to surf-riders, evening strollers and to all those who take advantage of the Juhu Beach.

Juhu Beach is a very pleasing beach. You must have enjoyed your evenings and nights in the cool and refreshing atmosphere prevailing there. The calm the rustle and the murmur must have given you a lasting peace. It must have provided a well earned rest after a week's hard labour. And must surely be holding some tender associations for you.

The calm and peace reigning there are bound to be disturbed by the thuds and thunders and shrieks and blasts of the falling bombs. Steps must be taken to stop the destruction. And they are being taken.

You will be glad to know that preliminary organization of civil defence and air raid protection has already begun.

Among other things, the following steps have been taken in this direction:

1. Sixty-four volunteers have enrolled for night patrols and out of them eight volunteers patrol every night from 11.30 p.m. to 4 a.m.
2. Trenches of the total length of 400 feet have been already dug by the free and voluntary labour of the villagers. Other trenches have been planned. These trenches now need to be riveted and boarded up, else they will become 'death-traps.'

We therefore, invite contribution from liberal donors like yourself. And are sure that our appeal will not be in vain.

3. First Aid Classes have been started and in the next few days, the first batch of volunteers will be trained in elementary A.R.P....

61. Weakening of Public Confidence: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

1. War General—The Japanese air raids on Ceylon and the east coast of India, the sinking of merchant and war ships in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea and the critical position in Burma have further weakened public confidence. However, one result has been that far more interest is being taken in Air Raid Precaution measures in Bombay....

Exodus—The exodus of mill-hands from Bombay City again increased after the pay day on April 10th and still continues. This was partly due to nervousness on account of enemy attacks on Ceylon and the east coast of India, and partly to the inconvenience experienced by them in the preparation of food in the absence of their families.

The total number of absentees in the day shift of all the mills in the City has now increased to about 50,000.



62. Feeling That Britain Cannot Win the War: Extracts from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Public opinion during the period under report has, if anything, further deteriorated. There is now a widespread conviction, in some cases perhaps only half-formed, that Britain cannot win the war and that the conquest of India by Japan is, in effect, inevitable. Some satisfaction was felt at the punishment inflicted upon the Japanese in Colombo. This was soon offset by depression at the news of the bombing of Vizagapatam and Cocanada, naval losses in the Indian Ocean and the continued enemy advance in Burma. Rumours continue to be rife and they are generally inspired by, or directed to the inculcation of, a belief that resistance to the enemy is bound to be profitless and that acquiescence is probably the policy likely to involve individuals in the least hardship and distress. There are insinuations that news is being suppressed and British losses concealed; allegations of discriminatory treatment continue to be made; and widespread currency is still given to stories calculated to induce the belief that Indians, as opposed to Europeans, will receive fair treatment at the hands of the Japanese invader. The followers and admirers of Subhas Chandra Bose are active and propaganda leaflets, well printed and effectively got up, have been widely circulated not only in Calcutta but also in distant parts of the Province....

Apart from these leaflets there is very little overt anti-war propaganda mentioned during the period under report. Indications, however, continue to be received that more than one revolutionary party is intending, or contains elements which intend, to co-operate with Japanese invaders. There are plans talked of to send agents to Burma to establish contact with the Japanese and arrange for supplies of arms and ammunition and efforts are being made to combine sections of a number of revolutionary parties in pursuance of such a programme.

Labour

11. The nervousness alluded to in the last report has steadily increased. After pay day, normally between the 7th and 10th of the month in the case of monthly paid workers, many factories reported diminished attendances, and shortage of labour is said to be restricting production in a number of factories. A strike at the Titaghur Paper Mill No. 1, which began among a few coolies on the 22nd March, spread until the whole mill was involved. Demands put forward included enhanced pay and dearness allowance. The strike continues in spite of all efforts to reach a settlement. There are strikes for enhanced dearness or war allowances of various kinds at the Gurepur Electric Welding Company, among the steamer crews of Messrs. Hoare Miller and Company and by the sweepers of Garulia Municipality. Other small strikes were quickly settled. Unrest continues among the employees of the Calcutta Tramways Company, the Port Trust and certain municipal employees. A general wave of uncertainty, and a disposition to raise petty grievances, restrict production, and ask for long leave and advances of pay, is shown by reports from all parts of the Calcutta and Asansol industrial areas.



63. Hardships of Indian Evacuees and Discriminatory Treatment:
Editorial Titled 'Immediate Inquiry'

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 5 April 1942.

The one question that has deeply exercised the mind of Indians in India as well as in Burma in the past few weeks is that relating to the evacuation of our nationals from that invaded country. Responsible Indians in Burma, who have come back to India, have narrated the terrible hardships of the Indian evacuees and the discriminatory treatment alleged to have been meted out to them. Some of these stories, which are gruesome, have found their way to print; some have not. The Central Legislatures and Indian newspapers, without exception, have discussed this matter and drawn to it the attention of the authorities concerned. Even important Indian commercial organizations have made representations to the Overseas Department about it. Most noteworthy of all is the fact that strong condemnation of such treatment has come from all sections of Indian opinion. Even Indian leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have felt impelled to criticize in strong language the incompetence and inefficiency of the authorities concerned.

The gravamen of the charges are mainly two—namely, that Indian evacuees were discriminated against and that they, particularly the humbler sections among them, suffered untold privations during their perilous journey from Burma to India as no adequate arrangements had been made by the authorities for their evacuation both by the sea and the land routes. So far as the second charge is concerned, there seems absolutely no reason to doubt that Indians had to undergo no end of troubles and hardships during their journey. Many, it is reported, even died of hunger and thirst and disease....

64. M.K. Gandhi on the Question of Evacuation, Sevagram,
13 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 27–8.

Question Box

....

When Leaders Differ

Q. You say people in the cities should evacuate under certain circumstances. Panditji and Rajaji say they should not on any account. What are we to do?

A. I appreciate your difficulty. I can only advise you to use your judgment and choose that advice which appeals to your reason. We are living in hard times such as we have never experienced before.

I am quite sure of my ground. People who are not wanted should evacuate from cities which are within the danger zone. There is no cowardice in orderly withdrawal. Women and children and aged people and all those who are not wanted should evacuate so as to enable the defenders the better to regulate defence of cities under their control. The evacuees will show real courage if they will settle down in villages and tackle problems that face villagers. Differences of opinion between leaders ought not to worry people. Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress. And the differences you refer to are honest.



65. M.K. Gandhi on Distress in Bengal, Sevagram, 14 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 33-4.

Bengal has suffered from communal riots, it is suffering from famine, and now it threatens to be the target of Japan. Military preparations are inevitable. This means eviction of villagers.

Satis Babu sends me a graphic account of an eviction near Chittapore. Thirty-three villages have been evacuated under very short notice. The notices were dated 1st April, served on the 2nd, and the villagers had to leave on the 4th. The troops entered on the 4th. In one village the villagers got the notice on the same day that the troops entered. The evacuees were paid removal cost at the rate of Rs.10 to 100 according to the Union rates they were paying. Compensation is to be determined and paid hereafter. The rules framed for evacuation are elaborate and read reasonable. But however reasonable they may be, the hardship of sudden evacuation is inevitable, and the enforcement of the rules having unavoidably to be left in the hands of many and petty officials, fairness cannot be ensured....

66. Deterioration in Public Morale and Restlessness amongst Labour:
Excerpts from Fortnightly Report for UP for the First Half of
April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Most District Magistrates report a definite deterioration in the public morale as the result of the bombing of Indian towns and the naval losses in the Bay of Bengal. But there is no sign of panic and defeatist rumours appear to circulate less easily. The growth of the movement to organize night patrols in towns may indicate an increasing realization that something must be done by the ordinary man in the street to meet the situation, but, generally speaking, it is being organized on party and communal lines and is based more on fear of one another than on any hope that anything can be done to resist the Japanese. The increasing flow of refugees from Burma and the stories they tell is also tending to lower morale.

.... Strikes continue over the question of bonus in Cawnpore, most of them short-lived. Labour there remains jumpy but the employment returns of the mills indicate that, though the exodus from the city has not ceased, it has slowed down. There was a short-lived strike in the Technical Training Centre at Bareilly. No grievances were formulated, but the District Magistrate is of opinion that recent orders regarding deductions from their pay were the cause of the trouble. A strike was brought about in the Railway Workshops in Gorakhpur as the result of what appears to have been deliberate fifth column activity. An agitator from Bihar spread a rumour that the baffle walls that are being constructed there were to prevent the workmen getting out of the works and the slit trenches were to bury them in when they had been killed. Practically all the men left work. The District Magistrate immediately went down and arrested the author of the trouble when he was addressing a meeting.



67. Lucknow DCC's Attempts to Deal with Exodus to Villages

The National Herald, 22 April 1942.

Exodus to Village

It is also proposed to arrange for the exodus of city people to the villages. Even though there is at present no immediate danger in Lucknow, people are perturbed on account of war news and propose to leave the city. Mahatma Gandhi's advice, in this connection has, to a certain extent, provided a further impetus for this exodus to the villages.

The D.C.C. is arranging with the people of a number of villages willing to accommodate and help such people—ten to 15 families each—as wish to leave the city and settle in villages. A list of such villages is being prepared in the D.C.C. office and those proposing to settle in villages are requested to communicate with the D.C.C. Lucknow, at its head office at Nizatullah Road, Lucknow.

68. Increased Alarm, Especially among Traders: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for the Punjab for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

War developments have to some extent been overshadowed by the momentous negotiations at Delhi, but the public has now had time to assimilate the significance of the first Japanese attacks on India and Ceylon. As a result, there has been a perceptible increase in alarm, and fears are growing that India is unprepared to meet a full scale Japanese attack. The Hindu trading classes, always more prone to alarm than other sections of the community, have actually left for Bikaner or other places of refuge in the hills. A tendency is also reported to convert currency into immoveable property; and alarmist rumours, though somewhat less prevalent than formerly, are still plentiful. There continues to be a decline in recruitment (though this is influenced to some extent by the imminence of the harvesting season) and the large number of military deserters contributes to the prevailing feeling of uneasiness.... The attacks on India, on the other hand, have with the exception of certain urban classes aroused hostility towards Japan, and the rough handling of the Japanese aircraft attacking Colombo gave rise to some obvious satisfaction. It is perhaps noteworthy that except for the Forward Bloc and the Congress Socialist Party (neither of which commands much influence in this province) no political party is now committed to a policy of open opposition to the war effort....

.... The imminence of a bumper wheat crop and the raising of the prices of wheat have resulted in the release of hidden stocks, and the wheat situation is now markedly easier....

69. M.K. Gandhi's Yarn Currency

The National Herald, 15 April 1942.

Whenever Mahatma Gandhi blazes a new trail, people instinctively feel attracted to it. Early suspicion melts away before realized experience. His latest attempt is to introduce a yarn currency. It has everything novel about it, but the times are propitious it being an era when humanity appears to be reverting to old patterns. People can sell their yarn and get either its value or exchange it for articles sold for household use. Yarn thus takes the place of Government currency for purchase of selected goods in the Gramseva Mandal shops in Wardha. The progress of the experiment will be carefully watched for its enormous potentialities.

70. M.K. Gandhi on Hissar Famine and Spinning, Sevagram,
12 April 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 21

Dr. Gopichand has been discussing with me famine in Hissar. It seems to have become almost chronic. The A.I.S.A.¹ has been working for many years in that district and giving relief to the poor people through spinning. Dr. Gopichand thinks that, if more capital can be made available, much aid can be given.

It is perhaps not possible to make a successful appeal outside Hissar. There is so much distress everywhere, and with the terrible spectre of war much more is to be expected. Therefore everywhere local charity has to be depended upon. As often happens even in poor areas there are to be found monied men. Bhiwani is a big trade centre in Hissar, and it has several monied men.

Let me hope that they and those others in Hissar who can will come to the rescue and do what they can for the much-needed relief.

¹ All India Spinners Association.

71. Public Uneasiness, Fear of Further Bombardments: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of April 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

1. The War—the situation in Burma and air raids on coastal towns in Ceylon and Madras and the news of the sinking of British war-ships in the Bay of Bengal have increased public uneasiness which is accentuated by the arrival of evacuees from Burma and Calcutta. Japan radio announcements that further bombardments were imminent if a political settlement was arrived at as a result of the Cripps negotiations was given wide currency and caused considerable apprehension. The collapse of the negotiations has caused general depression and 'it is now considered that the general feeling of inert apathy will continue and majority of people will either resign themselves to whatever might be coming or send their families to places further north.' Rumours continue to be prevalent and the evacuees from Burma are to a large extent responsible. While traveling on the Bengal and North Western Railway a Deputy Magistrate heard some evacuees say that while Rangoon was damaged more by the British than the Japanese, and the latter gave financial help to those who suffered during the attack, 'The Burma Government let out criminals who engaged in looting with a definite share for Government.' The Burmese were said to be more hostile and cruel to the Indians than was the nominal enemy Japan. It is rumoured in Ranchi district that His Excellency the Governor would soon go back to Patna, that Eastern Command headquarters would move westwards from Ranchi to a safer place, that the Japanese have entered Assam and that East Bengal is likely to go over to the enemy. Requisition of many motor vehicles for work on aerodromes and roads of military importance and the preparation of a register of motor drivers has given rise to some further rumours. There is reason to believe that defeatism is spreading and some Sadhus from Patna and Gaya, who recently visited the north of the river, are believed to be responsible for the spread of anti-British rumours and pro-Japanese propaganda on that side. Efforts are being made to trace them. Believing that Government intended to commandeer

all the standing wheat crop, cultivators in parts of the Northern districts are reported to have harvested the corn crop before it was time to do so.

Recruitment to the combatant forces is reported to be slow from most of the districts. The response for the demand for labour on the China road and on military works within the province is, however, satisfactory.... There is little opposition to pro-war activities as such but the tendency to enlist for Congress and other non-official bodies of volunteers and defence parties in preference to official A.R.P. and other organizations is growing. A large number of refugees from Burma is reported to have arrived in the northern districts of Bihar...

72. Feeling That Invasion of India Is Only a Matter of Time: Excerpt from Fortnightly Press Report of the Provincial Press Adviser, Bihar, for the First Fortnight of April 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Editorials

.... The danger of an invasion on India by sea, land or air is visualized by almost all papers. The 'Searchlight' points to the 120,000 and 150,000 crack storm-troopers ready in Java and Singapur to spring on India. It says 'An invasion of India now appears to be a matter of time. We are practically in dark as to the strength of defence at Calcutta'.

Extracts

.... *The Indian Nation* (12.4.42): 'The possibility of enemy parachutists attempting a landing on the Indian coasts as a preliminary to invasion in force is a very live possibility which we in India cannot ignore. Almost every country engaged in the war has to reckon with this possibility and make suitable arrangements for countering the danger. In Great Britain there is the Home Guard, which has been successively expanded since the summer of 1940, so that it now constituted an impressive army of civilians who, after receiving a short training, are in a position to deal with parachutists and enemy saboteurs etc. We require, in fact, a large guerilla army such as that envisaged [*sic*] by the Canadian Minister of Defence and we require it immediately, for danger to India from Japanese landings is much nearer and more real than that of Canada's. One of the first and foremost tasks of a reconstituted Central Government and the Defence Member of the Government of India, if one is appointed, will be to evolve a scheme for setting up an army of this description. Equally essential will it be for him to examine how the activities and work of the various organizations that now exist for civil and internal defence purposes can be pooled and co-ordinated so as to maximize their utility from the point of view of the country's security.'

73. Evacuation, Departure of Traders and Its Impact on Local Commerce: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the First Half of April 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

1. The War. The atmosphere of nervousness has not in any way changed for the better, but rather increased.... The ubiquitous radio received by which a great many persons pick up

enemy announcements as well as the material put out by the B.B.C. and all-India Radio, has had a deleterious effect upon morale, including that of the European population. The failure of all attempts to form a responsible civil Government either at Delhi or in the provinces, on the other hand, is for the moment a severe handicap on the development of any effective local propaganda system. Chiefly, the unfortunate effect on morale takes the form of excessive talk about evacuation. The fact that it has not yet been possible to work out a very definite picture of the action which should be taken by civil officials, industrial enterprises, and the ordinary population in case of an ultimate emergency resulting from invasion, makes it difficult at present to deal effectively with this kind of uninstructed talk.... The only important rumour that has come to light in the past week has been the easily disproved statement that April the 17th was to be the final date for evacuation from Shillong for women and children.... It is reported from Goalpara that in one case some villagers were so alarmed by foolish talk that they took to the jungle.

The attitude of the people in the Lushai Hills, which is the only district within measurable distance of which the enemy has so far penetrated, is a refreshing contrast to what has been indicated above. A meeting of the Chiefs was assembled at the beginning of the month at which general readiness to co-operate with the Defence Forces in resisting any aggression was unanimously expressed. The Lushais have also undertaken to furnish a labour corps for road construction....

The evacuation from Burma has been proceeding smoothly 45,932 refugees passing by the land route up to the 13th April.... Evacuation by air began three days in advance of the expected date, but for some reason unknown the actual numbers so far coming through are much less than what had been anticipated. Only a few hundred have so far used the route. The general population have been most ready to render all possible assistance in helping refugees....

7. Miscellaneous. The unnatural condition brought about by the departure of numerous member of the trading class, and withdrawal of credit, is increasingly more marked. Dealers are most unwilling to undertake transactions unless they are assured of payment either in cash or on receipt of bills of lading. This partly due to the dislocation resulting from the great burden now falling on the rail and river communications, partly to the delays in transit, partly to the difficulty in securing transport, and partly to a general feeling that credit is insecure.... Rice millers are unwilling to buy paddy for conversion. This may be due to difficulty in procuring fuel, though it is ascribed by some officers to a deliberate intention to work for high profits from a small outturn rather than reasonable profits from a large outturn. Paddy has been selling in some places at Rs 1-4-0 per maund and does not always find purchasers for cash. The suggestion put forward from many quarters is that Government should finance commercial transactions on a very large scale and should also undertake to store large reserves of foodstuffs....

74. Letter from Congress Workers of Noakhali to Jawaharlal Nehru,
22 April 1942, on Military Atrocities in Feni Sub-division of
Noakhali

AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

The incident happened at Chhanua a village 4 miles south of Feni. On Thursday the 16th instant some soldiers who were found loitering about near a house on some previous occasions, entered the house some time before noon. They attempted to coerce the women of the house. The

latter cried for help and defended themselves with a 'dao'. Some villagers went to rescue them and in the clash that followed one man was shot dead on the spot while others were severely wounded. One of these later died in the hospital while two others still in bed. Some four or five hours later a group of soldiers approached the village. The villagers in their simplicity thought that they had come for enquiry as the soldiers were accompanied by some White men. The soldiers asked the male folk of the village to come with them and putting them on guard at a distance let loose a part of their group over the village. What followed then can well be imagined. Every thing in these huts were looted or spoiled. Seven of the females who were brought to the town for medical examination have been found brutally ravished.

Minor incidents of soldiers' zoolum of course are very common. A couple of days earlier a cucumber seller of the locality was beaten so severely by soldiers that he was laid half dead. His dead body was found near a ditch on the next day. On Friday last (April 17) another old man of same locality who tried to defend a widow was found severely wounded on the head. According to the villagers minor oppressions like non-payment of price for things purchased and beating of persons on no account are of daily occurrence. About 20 thousand labourers engaged in military road construction have gone on strike against these oppressions and atrocities. The S.D.O. of Feni in a statement to the public had admitted that two men had been murdered by the soldiers (at Chhanua), but though he assured the labourers that such things would not happen again he did speak nothing about the culprits [*sid*]. As a matter of fact his assurance had come to be of no avail. The situation in the Sub-division is very serious. Com. Bankim Mukherjee M.L.A. and Congress men of Noakhali approached the District Magistrate and the Brigadier. The Brigadier agreed to punish the culprits but on the same breath he told us that nothing drastic could be done as that might cause trouble. Com. Mukherjee told him that nothing more harmful could be done to hamper war efforts, than that which has taken place. The brutality which was comparable only to the fascist atrocities only in occupied countries should have been punished long before. For the people to-day are more important than the army.

We appeal to All Indian leaders of all parties to take up the cause of Feni. We appeal especially to Mrs. Naidu, Smt. Amrit Kaur and Begam Shah Nawaz to take up the cause of Indian womanhood. We appeal particularly to Gandhiji, as publication of any report regarding the incident had been stopped by the Bengal Government and only Gandhiji's strong and just pen can possibly help in the matter, make the Government realize the gravity of the question, and assure the people of the locality that they are not left helpless at the mercy of the brute forces.

May we extend to you as Congressmen our invitation to tour the Bengal districts after the A.I.C.C. meeting in order to create among the people the feeling of resistance against aggression?

Dated, Noakhali,
The 22nd April 1942

Yours truly,
Sd/-

Rhithish Chandra Roychoudhury
Gopal Halder
Parimal Majumdar
P. (Illegible) Majumdar
Congress-Workers, Noakhali

75. Letter from Siddha Raj Dhadda, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, to Kaka Kalelkar, 23 April 1942, about Exodus of Civilian Population and Making Arrangements for Them
AICC Papers, F. No. G-4/1942, NMML.

My dear Kaka Saheb,

.... We discussed the other day the question of what the civil population should do, or be advised to do, in view of the approaching danger. Gandhiji has already been giving a lead through 'Harijan'. Jawaharlalji also has been advising people. I agree with you, however, that in view of the importance and urgency of the matter, the whole question should be discussed thoroughly with Bapu and a clear line of action should be chalked out. I have been turning over the question in my mind since several days past ... I am now putting down how I visualise the subject.

I am leaving aside for the time being the question of temporary 'abandonment' of their homes by people in the face of the advance of enemy forces as a part of the tactics of non-violent resistance which you referred to....

Apart from the above, the question of the exodus of civil population arises only on the ground that when a particular area becomes an active war zone, that is, comes in the front line of either serial or land attack, it is the safest and the best course for the civil population to withdraw from that area. This desire of the civil population to leave the actual war zone is understandable for, in any case, when two military forces clash with each other in a certain area, civil population or civil life cannot function effectively and thus be of no use to, and might even become a drag on, the military 'defenders'. I think, so far, it is only Soviet Russia which has followed this policy of total withdrawal of civil population systematically partly because such withdrawal was a part of their scheme of resistance, as you yourself visualised. I strongly feel, however, that conditions in India which are entirely different make the adoption of such course undesirable and also unnecessary. I shall explain my point further.

Firstly, the presence of a foreign Government in our country has changed the character of the war for us. Even if we desire to resist wholeheartedly any foreign invader, as we do, the Government machinery being not under our own control, we cannot give effect to this desire as we may like to and are not in the know of the mind of the Government. This situation has created uncertainty in the public mind and has rendered it almost impossible for us to adopt the methods of 'total warfare' which a total withdrawal of the civil population would necessitate. Secondly, in India the population involved is so large that wholesale withdrawal from one area to another would create immense problems which would defy solution. Apart from transport difficulties, people might have to face starvation and epidemics as the evacuees from Burma did. In fact, it may not be practicable at all. Thirdly, it is difficult to decide as to which is a 'safe' place to withdraw. The indiscriminate evacuation from a city like Calcutta has already led to a state of affairs in which people are fleeing from one place to another not knowing where they will be 'safe'. Moreover in India the British are not expected to be able to guard every point. They will naturally concentrate their defence arrangements in and near cities and the larger towns and hence the actual battle area may be confined to or near these places.

In view of the above considerations, I feel that people in the villages and also in interior towns should be definitely and clearly asked to stay where they are. At such places an overwhelming section of the population are children of the soil. There are, however, in certain places some

people who have come from other provinces but who have practically settled in those places. There is already a feeling in certain provinces that when times were good, these people came from outside, earned and enjoyed themselves but that when danger is drawing near and when their help and assistance would be needed by the residents of the province, they are thinking of fleeing to their 'homes'. It is, therefore, all the more essential that a general direction should not be given to people to leave from villages and interior towns. On the other hand, an appeal should also be made simultaneously to the people to give adequate protection to whomsoever happens to be in their midst and not to give vent to any narrow provincialism.

The question of voluntary evacuation would, therefore, arise only in respect of the bigger ports like Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Karachi etc. Of course, such evacuation is to be orderly and organized and, I think, such organization is the main object of all this discussion. In these cities, majority of the population comes from outside, that is, from the mofussil and even from other provinces, and they would also have a natural inclination to evacuate to their homes.

It is only in respect of this section of the population that we might think of evacuation and of providing facilities for such evacuation. I think, however, that even in respect of this section, the first advice to them should be to stay where they are so long as they have got work and the danger is not actually imminent. The scheme of making arrangements and keeping facilities ready for evacuation would, of course, take all this population into consideration and plans should be drawn on the assumption that all the people mentioned above may ultimately have to leave the cities and go to their homes or the provinces from which they might have originally come. The following suggestions occur to me in connection with the organization of this relief:

- (A) Although it would be difficult to get an accurate idea as to how many persons or families from a particular city would go to a particular Province, a rough idea should first be made as to the respective Provinces to which the people of the cities would like to withdraw and the approximate number of persons which each Province may have to receive from all these cities.
- (B) The work of receiving the evacuees and of making arrangements for the settling in the respective provinces should be entrusted to Provincial leaders.
- (C) The main thing, however, is that the evacuees from the cities will have to be looked after on the way to their respective Provinces. As a matter of fact, it is this part of the whole affair which would require organized relief and assistance. The example and the experiences of Burma evacuees are too fresh in our minds to require any emphasis on this point. Government is not expected to cope with this task, even if it intends to do so, because it will be too busy with military arrangements and affairs. This work of organizing relief and assistance 'on the way' could be centralised under one all-India Board which will, of course, work through such local relief organizations as exist in the respective areas. I have suggested an all-India body for the reason that if it is only left to local relief organizations there may be gaps on the way where no relief may be available.
- (D) The routes from the cities to the interior provinces are well-known. Although relief arrangements might be made at important railway junctions also, I feel that when the actual time of emergency comes, railway services may be disorganized and most of the evacuees may have to use roads. Even in respect of roads, such roads, for example, as the Grand Trunk Road may be reserved for military traffic. In any case, the routes which the evacuees to different provinces would follow can be easily foreseen. On the

other hand, this all-India body may itself, in consultation with Government authorities, suggest the routes.

- (E) On the routes so determined, Relief Camps might be opened at suitable distances where food, water, shelter and medical assistance may be available to the evacuees.

A really effective all-India body suggested in (C) above can be formed only if the Congress or Gandhiji himself, take up the question....

With respects,

Yours,

76. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh's Report on the Evacuation from the Different Districts of Bengal, 24 April 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Altogether about 1 ½ lac of people have been evacuated from different districts of Bengal:

Noakhali	75 thousand, of which 70 thousand are from Feni Sub-Divn.	
Chittagong	25	"
Tippera	20	"
Jessore	10	"
Diamond-Harbour	10	"
Behala	5	"
Khulna	4	"

After these figures were compiled, four more villages in Feni sub-division and nine villages in Tippera have been evacuated. In new areas of Chittagong, I am informed, order for evacuation has been passed but no details are yet available.

In Behala, the order of evacuation was announced by loud speaker at 10 p.m. on the 1st of April and people were asked to evacuate by the 2nd April. The Government made no arrangement for their evacuation nor paid any cost of removal. Behala Municipality helped the people as much as they could.

In Chittagong, 3 days' notice was given and the local authorities helped the people in removing their belongings to the new places of shelter.

In Noakhali and Tippera, practically 48 hours' notice was given. The Government did not help them in removing their belongings. Cost of removal was given at the rate of Rs.10/- for those paying no Chowkidary tax (union rate) and then the amount paid varied according to the union rate paid by the evacuee, maximum being Rs.100/- for those who paid more than Rs.10/- per annum as the union rate. Number of such persons does not exceed one in a thousand. The average amount paid may be about Rs.20/- per family.

In Diamond-Harbour, no cost of removal was at first given. The Congress President of the place met the Bengal Minister and about a thousand evacuees came to the Bengal Secretariat and as a result Rs.5/- to Rs.25/- was given as advance payment for compensation which includes cost of removal.

Largest number of people has been evacuated from Feni Sub-division of Noakhali. The people had practically to carry their belongings on their head. In some of the villages where they have taken shelter there has been great congestion. They are suffering from insufficiency

of drinking and bathing water. The Govt. has yet given no money for construction of huts. People have been asked to construct huts and then apply for cost. Poor people will not be able to build huts at all. In Tippera several families were actually living under trees for some days when through the intervention of the District Congress Committee some arrangement has been made for their temporary shelter. In Feni some people had to evacuate twice, but no cost of removal was given for the second evacuation. Due to shortness of time, people have not been able to remove paddy straw which is used for cattle fodder.

The most outrageous order passed was that in Midnapur where boats of certain sizes were asked to be removed to certain places by giving only 3 hours' notice. For non-compliance, due to shortness of notice, several boats have been destroyed or burnt. S.D.O. Contai has admitted destruction of some boats in a printed leaflet and promised compensation. Cases of intimidation, zulum, extortion etc. by the police have also been reported.

Boats and bicycles are being registered in coastal districts. Boats of certain sizes in Chittagong have also been asked to be removed to certain places in Tippera. These orders are being passed lest these boats etc. fall into the hands of the Japanese. In the countryside these orders have created a feeling among the people that the Government is incapable of protecting them from Japanese aggression.

Certain districts i.e. Dacca do not produce sufficient paddy. Dacca brings paddy from Barisal and Khulna mainly by boat. If these boats are commandeered there is bound to be serious consequences including food riots. In Comilla town bicycles are being seized. The first bicycle seized was that of Dr. Nripendra Nath Basu, Secy., District Congress Committee and a medical practitioner.

Excesses Committed by Soldiers

In Chanua, a village in Feni sub-division, two people died and two were seriously wounded by the firing of the military on the 16th last. One of the wounded persons has since then died in the hospital. It is reported that some soldier tried to assault a woman. Hearing her cries, villagers assembled. There was a scuffle and the soldiers fired with the result mentioned above. Several soldiers have been arrested over the incident. The additional S.D.O. Feni in a printed handbill issued to the local people has admitted death due to firing by military.¹

¹ On 28 April, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution on Evacuation Orders which was drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru. The text of this resolution is carried in the section on the Allahabad AICC Meeting and after, pp. 9-10.

77. Letter from A.R. Kaus, Secretary, Sadar SD PCC, Jessore, Bengal,
27 April 1942, to General Secretary, AICC, about Evacuation
Orders in His District
AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

Sir,

I am sending below an account how the people of a number of villages in this District had to suffer for compulsory evacuation from their places for your information.

All on a sudden a notice to evacuate was served at Jhakorgacha, a very big and old market place, perhaps the biggest and most important one in this District.

The notice was served on 6.4.42 in the afternoon and the people were given only 24 hours time. Subsequently, the time was extended for 48 hours more and then it was extended up to 14.4.1942.

The Notice was not properly served and only the residents of Jhakorgacha Bazar could know of it and they tried their utmost to comply with the Notice. It was subsequently known from the entrance of the soldiers into the huts and residential places of five neighbouring villages that the notice was actually meant for an area which may be roughly 4 sq. miles.

Thus simultaneously the soldiers occupied and entered the houses as soon as the people hardly came out.

No proper arrangement was made by the government for transportation. Only a few lorries and carts were supplied by the government. The big merchants could only take advantage of these carts and lorries though very insufficient in comparison with the needs of the people.

The small boats whose carrying capacity was not more than 10 to 12 heads realized rupees five to fifteen, carts realized rupees three to four and the coolies Rs two to five from the people who could get their services only when the rich people had finished their work.

Thus when the people came to know of the notice though not in proper way and in proper manner it was simply impossible for them to manage affairs.

They could not take the stocked jute, paddy, rice and other necessities of life for want of fund and also for want of proper conveyance.

They did not know where to go and how to go. Many left for unknown destination with their kiddies and cattle.

Soon after the people left their huts and residential places of their forefathers, their huts were burnt to ashes by the military authorities without the knowledge and consent of the poor and helpless sufferers who have not yet [been] given compensation for the same.

The government has, it is understood arranged for compensation—only the removal cost and nothing else but the same is being paid at Rs. 10/- for those who have no Union rate to pay and up to Rs. 25/- for persons paying Union rate. This is of course highly inadequate and unjustifiable in view of the fact that the people had to spend more money for removal.

Unfortunately this compensation also has not reached all the sufferers as many have left for unknown destination. Congress workers who were sent to the locality for rendering help and gathering true information have returned. They roamed for about 50 miles on foot but could not get the whereabouts of all, the government also has not yet been able to pay any sum to them. Moreover the officers who were deputed at Jhikorgacha Bazar failed to cope with the situation. More experienced and able officers should have been deputed by the local government for the purpose. The local police officers were reported to be more busy with the removal of their own family.

To add to their sufferings and troubles all possible avenues of their communication have been closed. The Jhikorgacha road has been closed up to Jhikorgacha Bazar from Jessore town for military purpose, Railway Booking form Jhikorgacha station has been stopped, boats and steamers are not allowed to ply in the river...

Thus more than eight thousand people have been rendered homeless and have been forced to suffer from all sorts of miseries for no fault of theirs and without any war.

.... In this connection it may be mentioned that several houses including the local college and some other educational institutions and some residential buildings of this town have been occupied by the military authorities. Taxis, cars and lorries of the public have been requisitioned.

They have served notices on eleven houses to vacate them by Mar 3rd 1942. It is likely that the military authority will requisition more houses of this town for stationing the R.A.F. officers. It is apprehended that the local District Congress House a beautifully situated one has been taken note of by them. In case any such notice is served on us—what will be our position? Shall we abide or resist? We solicit your instructions as to what to do.

Yours sincerely,

A.R. Kaus,
Secretary, Sadar SDCC Jessore
(Bengal)

78. Reply to A.R. Kaus from AICC Office, 6 May 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. G-31 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

We have your letter of the 27th April for which we thank you. The facts you have given make painful reading. The A.I.C.C. which met in Allahabad recently has drawn public attention to the scandals that are happening in some parts of the country in the name of evacuation. You will realise that it is primarily for the local workers to do what they humanly can to mitigate the hardships of the people in areas where compulsory evacuation is taking place. Mahatma Gandhi is writing on this subject in the *Harijan* and is drawing the attention of all concerned to the wanton suffering caused to the people by the hasty and ill conceived evacuations.

Yours sincerely

S. Ali
Office Secretary

79. M.K. Gandhi on Exodus of Traders, 27 April 1942
Harijan, 3 May 1942, in *CWMG*, Vol. 76, pp. 69–70.

Question Box

No Narrow Provincialism

Q. There are, in certain places, some people who have come from other provinces but who have practically settled in those places. There is already a feeling in certain provinces that when times were good these people came from outside, earned, and enjoyed themselves, but that when danger is drawing near and when their help and assistance would be needed by the residents of the province, they are thinking of fleeing to their 'homes'. Should you not advise such people to stay where they are and not to give vent to any narrow provincialism?

A. This question has come to me in various forms. It comes from Bengal and Assam. Merchants from other provinces have settled there for generations. Though they went to the respective provinces for their own sakes, they supplied a want, often useful. There is no doubt that their sudden withdrawal must hit hard those who have been hitherto used to make their daily purchases from these merchants. They cannot be easily and suddenly replaced, especially at a critical time like this. Therefore for these merchants to wind up their businesses would

certainly amount to desertion of duty, if they do not before leaving, ensure the continuance of their shops by proper substitute. It would be a different thing if the customers themselves evacuated and the merchants had to follow. The situation that faces the country is so novel that no opinion or solution can claim infallibility nor can judgment be pronounced without carefully weighing all the facts. But it seems to me to be the duty of mercantile organisations to examine the situation and give guidance to the merchants affected....

80. Orissa Plans for Emergency: Government Headquarters to Be Shifted to Sambalpur

The Bombay Chronicle, 1 April 1942.

Cuttack, March 31

A communiqué says: Recently the Provincial Government issued a communiqué to the effect that people in the coastal districts of Orissa who had no particular work or business to keep them there would be well advised to move further from the coast.

It has become necessary to consider that alternative arrangements should be made for carrying on Government of the province, should a situation arise which would make it impossible in Cuttack. It is decided that in such circumstances, the provincial headquarters would move to Sambalpur and preliminary arrangements have been set in motion. As a first step, the bulk of the Government records and part of the Secretariat Staff will be moving to Sambalpur about the middle of April. This does not mean that Government will itself move in the near future. All these preliminary arrangements are being made, so that Government by the province can be carried on with the minimum of dislocation, should this become necessary....

81. Sinking of Ships, Requisition of Boats and Bicycles: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

WAR—The recent Japanese attacks on ports and shipping along the East Coast have considerably alarmed the public, particularly those residing in coastal towns, and the success of these attacks has naturally led people to inquire whether there is anything to prevent actual landings. The news of the sinking of a number of ships by enemy action off the Orissa coast on the 6th morning caused a shock, especially when it was followed by a rumour that the Japanese had landed (apparently some of the survivors were taken for Japanese).... On the 7th, 400 or 500 survivors, Europeans and Americans and Indians and Chinese, came in to Cuttack, having had to walk miles, many of them barefoot, through jungle and swamp, after which they had an exhausting journey in busses over bad roads. They finally reached Cuttack in batches between 11 P.M. and 3 A.M. The injured ones were sent to hospital, and the others were accommodated with food and lodging and clothes (many of them, Europeans and Indians, had practically no clothing), in the Ravenshaw College. Other batches of survivors came in the next day, and some landed further along the coast and went straight to Calcutta. All except the hospital cases, some of whom still remain, were evacuated to Calcutta or other destinations, within 2 or 3 days....

BOATS AND BICYCLES—On the evening of the 6th, orders were received from the Eastern Command that boats and bicycles and buses within twenty miles of the coast were to be immobilized or removed. Immediate instructions were therefore issued by telegram to give effect to this; and, although arrangements had not been previously perfected for carrying out this order, and although the order naturally caused a certain amount of hardship, it has, on the whole, been satisfactorily carried out. Revised orders have since been received and issued, slightly modifying the original orders. Bicycles and buses which had actually been handed over for immobilization have been handed back, but steps are being taken to register all bicycles throughout the province, so that, on receipt of any subsequent order, immediate steps may be taken to immobilize them.

82. Loss of Public Confidence, Exodus of Labour and Marwaris from the City: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the First Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The War—In my last report I was constrained to note that there had been a serious loss of public confidence. The news from Ceylon, and the bombing of Vizagapatam and Coconada, has naturally not improved the position, and during the last few days a certain number of timid people have quitted the town.... the exodus seems to be mostly of poor people who had come into Delhi seeking work and have now decided that safety at home is to be preferred to good wages abroad. In addition a certain number of Marwaris and other upper class men have sent their families away, while they themselves regain and continue with their normal business. The persons who have thus quitted Delhi have apparently done so in apprehension not so much of air raids as of the civil commotion which they imagine might occur in the event of an invasion of India. Another cause has been an extraordinary story that certain parts of Delhi are to be declared as military areas whatever that may mean, and women and children evacuated from them ... An official contradiction of this rumour has been issued but it still persists to some extent.

.... The orders prohibiting the export of wheat from the Punjab and the United Provinces have been withdrawn and for the time being at any rate the difficulties on that account are at an end.

83. Crop Failure, Rise in Food Prices, and Misbehaviour by Troops: Extracts from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

It is reported that the second crop paddy on about 5000 acres at the tail end of the canals in West Godavari District perished for want of water as the level of water in the channels had to be kept low in the month of March for facilitating the execution of some Military works.

There was a rise in the price of foodstuffs in some of the interior areas owing to the supply being unable to cope with the sudden increase in demand due to the influx of evacuees.

.... The District Magistrate Vizagapatnam has received a report that 800 troops in a special Military train got down at Kotabommali Railway Station, raided an arrack shop and some other houses and carried away Rs.200/- in cash, 40 gallons of arrack and some other articles. They are also said to have beaten some of the villagers. The matter is under investigation.

84. Exodus from Bombay, Azad Radio Broadcasts about Impending Bombings: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The exodus from Bombay City continued on a fairly large scale during the first half of the fortnight, but it declined during the second half. Rumours of an alarmist nature and in particular a threat over the 'Azad Radio' that Bombay would be bombed between the 18th and 24th April encouraged the exodus, and many merchants, particularly those dealing in drugs and cloth, moved their stocks to safer places up-country.

The total number of absentees in the day shift of all the mills in the City increased to about 55,000 during the first half of the fortnight, but during the second half this number decreased slightly.

There was also an increased exodus from the Bombay Suburban and Poona Districts.

85. Bombay PCC on the Scorched Earth Policy: Letter from S.K. Patil, General Secretary, BPCC to General Secretary, AICC, 21 April 1942

AICC Papers. F. No. P-7/1942, NMML.

Dear Friend,

We beg to communicate to you the following resolution which has been unanimously passed by the B.P.C.C. at its meeting held on the 17th instant:

'The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee declares that the scorched-earth policy is not suited to India and supports the views expressed by Mahatma Gandhi in his signed article in "*Harijan*" dated March 22, 1942'.

Yours sincerely,

Sd./ S.K. Patil
General Secretary

86. Slow Return to Normalcy: Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The War—The despondency which had overcome the public as a result of the raids on Colombo, Vizagapatam and Cocanada and of the threat of invasion by the Japanese was relieved to some extent by the news of the successful bombing of Tokyo and other Japanese towns by the

Allies. The public have also been reassured by the Government's decision to recall some of its offices back to Madras.

The exodus from Madras which assumed large proportions following the move of the Government offices into the interior has now come to a stop. Many families, especially of the poorer classes are now returning to the City. Some of the hotels and restaurants and provision shops have re-opened.

.... The exodus was not confined to Madras City only but extended to all coastal areas. Conditions in these areas are however slowly returning to normal.

87. Hardships Caused by the 'Denial' Policy: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the Second Half of April

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

Varying accounts have been received of the state of public morale during the period under report. In the areas more immediately threatened and in those in which measures have been taken to facilitate troop dispositions or in pursuance of the 'denial' policy people are nervous and panicky. The denial policy, particularly in respect of boats, will undoubtedly cause very serious hardship and in some parts of the Province, notably in those producing some of the heaviest yields of paddy, cultivation will be rendered extremely difficult, if not in some cases virtually impossible, without the boats on which the cultivators entirely depend for moving about at some parts of the year.... From Mymensingh come reports of great depression based upon a conviction that defeat is certain, stimulated by exaggerated accounts and rumours brought by refugees and taking the form, in some cases, of a desire to get things over as soon as possible, even if this means submission to the Japanese invaders. In Calcutta and the neighbouring areas on the other hand public feeling has rallied. This improvement is probably to a large extent inspired by relief that the further expected attacks on India did not follow those on Vizagapatnam and Cocanada....

88. Jawaharlal Nehru's Address to Workers of the Howrah District Congress Committee Office, 19 April 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 253-5.

.... Congressmen should inculcate in the people the programme laid down by the Congress, in the matter of self-sufficiency and self-protection. We have already begun the work in the United provinces but there might be certain difficulties in carrying out such work in certain parts of Bengal which have been declared military areas. Villagers must form groups of five to ten villages, which should produce their essential requirements, namely, food and clothing. These village units will not rely on motor or railway transport. As for self-protection, forty to fifty families can combine to form a unit to protect themselves against lawlessness in the event of an emergency. The towns too should be divided for the purpose, into wards or *mohallas* as it has been done in Allahabad. The programme, if carried out successfully, will give them self-confidence. Moreover, if the administration at any time breaks down, especially in the countryside, the people themselves will have the opportunity to take up the responsibility of running the government.

I am very much pained to learn that with the entry of Japan into Burma, lakhs of people have in panic evacuated the city of Calcutta. They should have borne in mind the fact that bombs can cause injury only to a fraction of the population. It is, therefore, foolish to leave the city en masse. Almost every other people in the world including the Chinese, British and Russians are taking it manfully. The people of Chungking, who have been enduring air attacks for the last four or five years, deserve special praise. Here city-dwellers are migrating to villages but do not realize that even there immense problems of sanitation, food and medical aid can crop up. People should stick to their jobs and protect their hearths and homes, their wives and children....

89. M.K. Gandhi on Foreign Soldiers in India, 26 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 49–50.

Among the multitude of questions contained in my correspondence is the one referring to the advent of foreign soldiers in India. We have foreign prisoners enough. Now we have promise of a never-ending stream of soldiers from America and possibly China. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied arms. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation pure and simple for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. If the British left India to her fate as they had to leave Singapore, non-violent India would not lose anything. Probably the Japanese would leave India alone. Perhaps India, if the main parties composed their differences as they probably would, would be able effectively to help China in the way of peace and in the long run may even play a decisive part in the promotion of world peace. But all these happy things may not happen if the British will leave India only when they must. How much more creditable, how much braver it would be for Britain to offer battle in the West and leave the East to adjust her own position! There is no guarantee that she will be able to protect, during this war, all her vast possessions. They have become a dead weight around her. If she wisely loosens herself from this weight, and the Nazis, the Fascists and the Japanese instead of leaving India lone choose to subjugate her, they will find that they have to hold more than they can in their iron hoop. They will find it much more difficult than Britain has. Their very rigidity will strangle them. The British system had an elasticity which served so long as it had no powerful rivals. British elasticity is of no help today. I have said more than once in these columns that the Nazi power had risen as a nemesis to punish Britain for her sins of exploitation and enslavement of the Asiatic and African races.

Whatever the consequences, therefore, to India, her real safety and Britain's too lie in orderly and timely British withdrawal from India. All talk of treaties with the Princes and obligations towards minorities are a British creation designed for the preservation of British rule and British interests. It must melt before the stern reality that faces all of us. Princes, in so far as they rely upon their armed strength, are more than able to defend themselves against unarmed India. The fiction of majority and minority will vanish like the mist before the morning sun of liberty. Truth to tell there will be neither majority nor minority in the absence of the paralyzing British arms. The millions of India would then be an undefined but one mass of humanity. I have no doubt that at that time the national leaders will have wisdom enough to evolve an honourable

solution of their difficulties. This presupposes Japan and other powers leaving India alone. If they do not, I should hope even then for wisdom to guide the principal parties to devise a scheme whereby they can act with one mind to face the new menace.

Holding the views I do, it is clear why I look upon the introduction of foreign soldiers as positive danger thoroughly to be deplored and distrusted. The present state of things and the attempt to uphold it are a distinct sign of corroding consumption of the body politic in India.

90. M.K. Gandhi on the Scorched Earth Policy Again, Sevagram,
27 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 71–2, 3 May 1942.

.... Money taken thorough taxation has not been felt so keenly as is the direct deprivation of thousands of homesteads as in Feni. No promise of compensation can be any comfort for the dispossession of the present tenements. To the poor people it is like taking away their bodies. The dispossession of the country boats is almost like that of the tenements. To deprive the people in East Bengal of their boats is like cutting off a vital limb. I wrote almost in defence of the procedure adopted by the authorities in Feni. I have polite but angry protests against my endorsement. The correspondents tell me that I know nothing of the conditions of life in East Bengal. I cannot plead guilty to the charge. Only I felt that people must be asked to resign themselves to the inevitable. Later information from Feni compels a revision of the attitude I had adopted. I had assumed considerate action by the authorities in the face of the impending danger. But I must defer final judgment. The authorities are reported to be carrying on an investigation. I hope it will be comprehensive.

Certain risks have to be taken even when danger overtakes us. Thus people cannot be asked or advised to starve or die of thirst for fear of the Japanese helping themselves to the people's provisions or water. They may fight them to prevent their use, but they must risk their loss and not die before their death in order to prevent their use by the Japanese forces.

It is time I came to the last and the most vital part of the question. As an out-and-out war-resister, is it my duty to ask the affected people to resist, non-violently of course, the deprivation of their holdings including boats? But my very non-violence has deterred me from offering opposition to the point of embarrassment. Whether embarrassment through opposition in Feni would have been avoidable or not is a question of fact on which I cannot yet pronounce opinion. I would hesitate up to the last moment. I can only hope that the authorities will find a way whereby they can avoid distress such as has been caused in Feni.

91. Food and Cloth Shortage: Extract from Fortnightly Report for
Bengal for the Second Half of April

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The supply of atta improved slightly, but is still very far from satisfactory, and the control over prices is still largely ineffective. Coarse rice is still available in sufficient quantities, but stocks in industrial areas are small and the price is beginning to harden. A shortage of salt and kerosene oil is reported, and since cloth shops are still closing down, cloth is both dear and scarce. Other food supplies show no tendency to ease, but since most large factories have now some kind of grain scheme in operation, the genuine hardship has been to some extent mitigated.

92. Frustration and Disillusionment with the Government: Extract from Fortnightly Report for the United Provinces for the Second Half of April

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

There has been little change in the attitude of the public to the war. The good effect of the bombing of Tokyo was short-lived and apathy and the opinion that Government is incapable of doing anything either at home or abroad to save the country from what seems to be its inevitable fate have however probably increased. The brave words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru produce little but a sense of frustration. He is considered to be more anti-British than anti-Japanese. The number of those who hold that perhaps the Congress is right and that possibly the best thing to do in the war is to remain aloof appears to be on the increase. Patriotic men are becoming more and more insistent on strong action against those who sell their country.

93. Defeatist Tone in the Press: Extract from Appendix 1 of the Fortnightly Report for UP for the Second Half of April 1942; Appreciation of the Attitude of the Press

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

.... The *National Herald* amongst English papers and the *Pratap* amongst Hindi ones ... kept harping on the familiar old bitter and defeatist tune. Both particularly emphasized the grave situation in the East, the *Pratap* voicing its conviction that 'it is impossible for the British to improve the situation in the East' and the *National Herald* persuading its readers to recognize that 'there is no stop to Japan's advance in Burma'.... Many Hindi and Urdu papers went on publishing news from the East and commented on them with a view to stressing that an attack on India was imminent, one paper going so far as to regard it as a matter of a few days! But this recognition of the danger to India was in very few cases accompanied by an expression of determination to resist the invader: most papers just contented themselves with pointing out the danger and deploring India's incapacity to do anything about it....

2. The tone of the press in general was most unsatisfactory. Headlines during this fortnight were rather worse than possibly, ever before. A noteworthy feature of the period was the increasing popularity of the device, probably first practiced by the *Vartman*, of putting the most objectionable comments on war and political topics, into a 'wit and humour' column.

94. Decline of Defeatist Talk but Persistence of Uneasiness: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

1. The War—Due to the comparative lull in military operations, the absence of any fresh attacks on India, the revelation of the arrival of American forces in this country and the heartening statements of General Wavell and Colonel Johnson fears of external aggression have considerably receded, and there has been a noticeable decline in defeatist talk amongst the urban population. Hostility to Japan is becoming more pronounced, and whilst the bombing of Tokyo evoked considerable satisfaction and a demand for a fresh Allied offensive, politicians

have been noticeably more emphatic in their exhortations to the people to resist Japanese aggression and to beware of Japanese propaganda.... At the same time, talk of evacuation of Indian cities has caused uneasiness, and the emigration of urban Hindus to remote localities and a tendency to convert currency into immoveable property are reported from more than one area. Amongst the rural population, the presence of large numbers of military deserters, the return of evacuees from occupied areas and the continued absence of news of relatives killed or taken prisoner in the Far East are the principal factors contributing to sap morale.... Meanwhile, however, fear of internal unrest predominates over other anxieties and whilst the trading classes live in fear of depredations by bad characters generally, the Muslim and Sikh communities are becoming increasingly suspicious of one another. Plans to raise communal volunteer organizations are accordingly much in evidence, and the *Akalis*, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu *Mahasabha* and the *Ahrars* are all undertaking individual campaigns in this behalf.

95. Loss of Public Morale and Panic about Stationing of Troops: Extract from the Fortnightly Report of Bihar for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The War—The news of the bombing of Tokyo and other places in Japan and the absence of further air raids on coastal towns in India and Ceylon had temporarily steadied the morale of the people. The situation, however, again received a set back by further advances of Japanese forces in Burma and public morale in general is low almost everywhere, a tendency which is accentuated by high prices and shortage of essential commodities causing serious distress among the poorer classes and a marked increase in crime. According to reports from certain districts a good deal of harm is being done by speakers in Congress meetings who deliberately encourage the defeatist complex by recounting recent Japanese successes and decrying British efforts to check them. While Congress speakers may be deliberately spreading defeatism, this is by no means confined to Congress circles and nothing but striking victories in Burma and the Indian Ocean will now help to improve the position. Addressing a Congress meeting presided over by Professor Abdul Bari at Koilwar in the Shahabad District, Babu Jagjiwan Ram, a Parliamentary Secretary of the late Congress Ministry, openly declared that Indians were not on the side of the British in the war and that Cripps had come to India to foster Hindu-Muslim disunity. The Superintendent of Police of the district reports that many ordinary people believe the Japanese to be Hindus and, therefore, there is no need for any fear from a Japanese invasion.... [T]here is still a tendency to panic at the prospect of proximity of troops and to give undue prominence to allegations of their misbehaviour. At Deoghar in the Santal Parganas, the erection of huts for evacuees led to a rumour that they are in reality for the accommodation of soldiers, and in the neighbouring district of Bhagalpur, which perhaps because of its proximity to Bengal and its situation across the route taken by the evacuees and refugees, has provided a fertile field for all kinds of rumours, it is believed that India has been leased out to America under the Lease and Lend arrangement, that Nepal wants the Tirhut Division in exchange for supply of troops and that Calcutta is not being bombed because of Subhas Chandra Bose.



96. Vulnerability of Bihar and the Weakness of the Official Machinery:
Press Extracts from the Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second
Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The 'Searchlight' (18.4.42): 'Bihar's responsibility is heavy, indeed. Geographically, strategically and economically, it is so situated as to prove to a large extent, to be the decisive theatre of the War should that monstrosity directly invest this long-suffering country. The physical features of the province, particularly of Chota Nagpur with its hills and hillocks, valleys and dales, the main arteries of communication with upper India that either start or pass through Bihar and, above all, her rich mineral deposits such as Steel, Coal, Mica, Copper, and Bauxite combine to make of Bihar a province of the utmost strategic and economic importance. The official machinery is creaking ignominiously if it has not already collapsed. The province knows but too well that the growing menace of dacoity is being met with nothing more effective than tradition, red-tape and routine. On the highest official authority, the district of Saran is recognized to be the vital link in the chain of dacoities but even in a crisis, when Government cannot afford to risk internal insecurity, one does not know of a single special measure to meet the situation....'

97. Loss of Livelihood for People from the Coastal Areas: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Orissa for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

The alarm created by the Japanese attacks on shipping and towns on the east coast has now largely subsided, although, possibly, the mass of people would again be just as ready to believe absurd rumours when similar incidents recur...

Withdrawals from savings banks during the last fortnight appear to have been on a heavy scale....

.... The people of the coastal areas who have temporarily lost their livelihood due to the evacuation of boats are being induced by offer of good wages to come and work on military works of construction and it is expected that there will be some recruitment of labour from the coastal areas for road and aerodrome construction works.

7. Economic—The difficulty of obtaining railway wagons for the export of paddy and rice, the closure of certain rice mills and the suspension of canal traffic in the coastal districts, has resulted in accumulation of large stocks of paddy and consequent fall of prices.

The return in large numbers of Oriya evacuees has also resulted in the unemployment problem becoming acute, particularly in the Ganjam district, and Government have passed orders permitting the execution of works up to Rs.30,000/- to help the evacuees from Rangoon and also such of the local ryots whose crops were affected last year.

It is reported that kerosene oil dealers are resorting to the practice of hoarding their stocks with a view to obtaining higher prices afterwards. Action is being taken by the District Magistrate concerned against such dealers under the Defence of India Rules.



98. Scarcity of Ragi: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Coorg for the Second Half of April 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/4/42, NAI.

AGRARIAN. The difficulty about ragi referred to in my last report continues. Fairly large quantities are being exported from Coorg to Madras. Mysore is proving very unhelpful in the matter and has so far entirely refused to allow any ragi to be imported into Coorg. I have therefore had to wire to the Government of India for permission to prohibit any further export.

99. Scorched Earth Policy in India

The Indian Review, April 1942.

Reports, from occupied countries in the Far East give harrowing accounts of what is called the scorched earth policy adopted by the withdrawing forces, presumably from the Russian example.

Businessmen in India are alarmed at the prospect of such a policy being adopted in this country. Sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas, speaking at the Federation of India Chambers of Commerce at Bombay, said:

I can understand 'Scorched earth' policy in Russia where every factory belongs to the State. In India, where factories are put up by private capital and enterprise, I should like to put it bluntly: Do the Government expect that the masses and classes will contently [*sic*] look on when these factories on which their livelihood depends are scorched?

He only touched upon the subject but he wished to bring home to the Government that unless they felt diffident of retaining India, they must give protection and inspire confidence among middlemen and capitalists who had sunk their money and handled the material. 'If the Government's policy was such as would demolish confidence, they had to thank themselves.'

Presiding over the All-India Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Sir Sultan Chinoy endorsed this view and added that while the business community was willing to sacrifice much for the successful prosecution of the war, at the same time it expected the careful avoidance on the part of the Government of 'senseless sacrifices' which were calculated to ruin irreparably the country's industrial structure and spell unhappiness and poverty for many millions of innocent citizens.

A similar view was expressed in the Central Legislature when Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi pointed out that even in Russia when Russians re-occupied lost territory they were hampered by their own scorched earth policy.

Thus it is held that the deliberate destruction of industries built up as the result of long years of preparation and at large expense, to spite the enemy, will arouse an amount of public resentment altogether disproportionate to the advantage it will secure as a measure of war.

100. Strike in the Central Ordnance Depot, Delhi Cantonment, April 1942: Report by the CID

GOI Home Political File No. 12/2/42, NAI.

There is an almost total strike in progress at the Central Ordnance Depot, Delhi Cantonment. For some time past there has been some agitation and discontent amongst the labourers regarding the question of a dearness allowance although it had been made clear to them that

a dearness allowance had been sanctioned with effect from the 1st January but payment could not be made until formal orders were received. On the 31st March when the leading hands (equivalent to foremen) were leaving the C.O.D. it is alleged that one of them was struck by a British Sergeant on duty at the gate. This brought matters to a head and on the 1st April the three hundred odd leading hands employed at the C.O.D. went on strike. Today most of the labourers have joined the strike. The labourers number about 2,500 to 3,000 and exact figures of the number at work to-day are not yet available; the number is, however, small. At a meeting of the leading hands yesterday and at a meeting held this morning and attended by some 1000 of the labourers various demands have been drawn up. Some of these are—

- (1) the Sergeant who struck a leading hand should submit a written apology;
- (2) leading hands should not be searched when leaving the COD;
- (3) leading hands should be given permanent passes instead of daily passes as at present;
- (4) details of the dearness allowance sanctioned must be made known (the allowance sanctioned is Rs. 3/12 p.m. to all persons whose pay is Rs.60/- or under);
- (5) the Welfare Supervisor should be dismissed;
- (6) the salary of low paid employees should be increased;
- (7) full pay for the period of the strike;
- (8) no penalization of strikers;
- (9) the Labour Union of the C.O.D. (which has now been formed) should be officially recognized.

There are also other demands.

I visited the C.O.D. this morning and so far everything is peaceful. Information has just been received (12 noon) that a deputation to put forward the demands of the labourers is being received by the Officer Commanding of the Depot. Many of the labourers have left the vicinity and have presumably returned to their residence in Delhi.

In addition to the C.O.D. police guard a reserve of 1 Sub Inspector, 2 Head Constables and 25 Foot Constables is present at the C.O.D. Orders have been issued for this reserve to be doubled.

So far there appears to be no outside influence at work but there are undoubtedly some bad people amongst the employees on some of whom records exist. This matter is under investigation.

There has been some talk of the strikers approaching the Congress but so far nothing in this direction appears to have been done.

Sd/- R.G. Mellor
Superintendent of Police, C.I.D.
Delhi, 2.4.42, A.S.K.

101. Jawaharlal Nehru on His Assam Tour: Statement to the Press,
25 April 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 263–7.

For four days and three nights, I toured up and down the valley of the Brahmaputra and visited many places in both the lower and upper Assam. The tour was all too brief. Yet, with a maximum of rapid movement (in spite of petrol difficulties and motor mishaps) and a minimum

of sleep, I covered a great deal of ground. During my eighty-four hours' stay, I traveled about 800 miles and visited Gauhati, Naogaon, Golaghai, Dimapur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Tezpur and Boko, and stopped for a brief while at many other places. I also saw the evacuee arrangements at Parbatipur and Pandu.

My object was two-fold: to meet my Congress colleagues and fellow-workers, to confer with them about the work to be done, to renew contacts with the pleasant and agreeable people of Assam, and to understand the situation in the province. Secondly, to meet evacuees from Burma, to find out what was being done for them and what more could be done.

... I do not propose to go into any details here as I do not think I am competent to do so without inquiry. Also, I presume, that Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru who recently went to Imphal with Mr. Aney, and who had greater opportunities of observation, will give the public his impressions of what he saw. His recommendations will no doubt be valuable. I could not go as far as Imphal, as this required special permits, which I did not possess. I could only visit Dimapur on Manipur Road, the base camp of the evacuees who come that way. Among the large number of evacuees I met, whether they came by road or air, there were two dominant feelings: a feeling of relief that they were at last out of the hell they had been living in for some months past, and a feeling of great resentment at the racial discrimination, especially on the Burma side of the road. They had suffered much, had lost almost everything they possessed had been ill-treated by petty officialdom, and yet one and all experienced a feeling of enormous relief at being back in India....

One does not expect comforts and conveniences in war time, especially when an invading army is advancing. But the civil population does expect a measure of protection from the Government that is functioning and, in times of crises especially, fair treatment and no discrimination. One of the astonishing things that happened in Burma was the collapse of the Governmental apparatus. The manner of the evacuation of Rangoon and South Burma was discreditable. Local officials functioned in some places and they seldom functioned well. Indians in distress seemed to have no friends outside their own ranks; neither the local officials nor the Burmans looked upon them with friendly eyes. Everybody suffered because of the inefficiency of the arrangements but the Indians suffered most. It is amazing that it should have taken two or three months for some order to emerge out of all this.

... On the Burma side, conditions are still bad. The main route so far has been through Manipur and nearly one thousand people are coming through this daily. Along this route, as is well known, there was the scandal of the 'White road' and the 'Black Road'. The 'White Road' is probably a misnomer as many people whose complexions were very dark indeed were permitted to go along it, provided they had trousers on—those insignia of European civilization. One instance was brought to my notice when a gentleman in trousers was allowed to travel by bus, but when his wife appeared in a sari, he got into difficulties. Recently Indians, even in dhotis and pyjamas or saris, have been allowed to travel along the 'White Road', but there are still certain restrictions limiting their numbers.

The air route from Myitkyina to Dibrugarh is now being used extensively for evacuation. Few Indians were brought over this way and those few who came had to pay heavily, while others were transported free or almost free. Now, many more Indians are brought over and a certain latitude in payment allowed, according to the evacuees' financial condition. Some are flown over free ...

On the Indian side of the route, there were complaints of misbehaviour of petty officials and police and sometimes extortion. Medical arrangements are still poor, though some doctors

have been sent, but without adequate equipment or supplies. Nevertheless, there has been recently considerable improvement on the Indian side. It is the Burma side that appears to need complete overhauling. From all reports that we had, conditions are highly unsatisfactory there. No efforts are made to collect Indians in proper camps and they drift in from all sides and have to shift for themselves. Sometimes they have to stay at the route head for many days before they can get permission to go through. This applies to both the land route and the air route. In Myitkyina, we were told that the camp houses were more or less reserved for Europeans, and Indians had to live under the trees or make some other arrangements. In India, large numbers of relief workers and societies help to lighten the burden of these unhappy refugees. Not so in Burma, where both officials and people favour non-Indians in every way.

I was told that a large sum is paid by the government to a number of European planters and their assistants for helping the evacuees. Apart from the fact that European planters are unsuited for looking after Indian evacuees, it seems odd that public money should be spent in this way, when there is no lack of voluntary help available.... The scope of this voluntary work could easily be increased, given opportunities by the government. It seems to me especially necessary for relief organizations to be allowed to go all along the Manipur Road right up to the Burma base camp. Why government should object to this, I do not know. It will lighten their burden, increase efficiency, and bring a human element into the work, which is lacking where only officials function. In Dibrugarh, there should be one or more women workers to look after the women evacuees.

.... The problem is not solved by merely bringing evacuees to India. An effort has to be made to provide work for them. A businessman told me that he was prepared to provide for five to ten thousand either in his sugarcane plantations or in factories. But the Assam Government did not encourage him or his scheme.

I understand that some effort is being made by provincial governments to provide for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans in India. Members of the Burma civil Service are, of course, immediately absorbed into the Indian Civil Service. They find their level there. As for the humbler folk, I have no objection to India extending her hospitality to all who are in distress. But it is absurd and intolerable that our own people should be ignored in the process.

An incident, which brings out the way officialdom functions in Assam, was brought to my notice by a friend. Some weeks ago, about 700 tea garden labourers were impressed for work on the Manipur Road and were being taken to Dimapur. They reached Pandu and remained there for two or three days waiting for the train to carry them. There were no arrangements for their food or shelter. No one had given thought to this matter.

I have not touched here on the many problems of Assam. One problem of recent growth cannot, however, be ignored. This is the food scarcity due chiefly to disorganisation of transport. This must be attended to.

102. Shops Reopening in Madras City; Labour 'Jumpy' in Andhra Ports: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Madras for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The War—The success of the allied fleet in the battle of the Coral Sea and the British landing in Madagascar have distinctly restored confidence. While the Japanese successes in Burma

and the bombing of Chittagong have made people realise the immediate threat to India, there is a belief that the Japanese are not likely to devote their immediate attention to South India. As people feel that there is an improvement in the War situation, more shops and restaurants which were closed during the scare are being reopened in Madras City.

There is a decided improvement in the situation at Vizagapatnam and Cocanada where people are returning to their normal avocations. Labour in the harbour is however said to be still very 'jumpy' and on May 1st the sounding of a ship's siren resulted in most of the labour leaving the area. They were eventually persuaded with some difficulty to return to work. The District Magistrate of Vizagapatnam doubts if the morale of the people would stand another raid any better than the first one.

The number of evacuees from Burma and Malaya who have come back to this Province is large and many of them are reported to be in distress. An effort is being made to induce some of the unemployed evacuees in Vizagapatnam District to work at the Aerodrome where a number of coolies are required. It is reported that there are as many as 15,000 unemployed evacuees in this District and it is proposed to open test works under the Famine code for them if necessary. The distress is particularly acute among those who are accustomed to petty shopkeeping and not to labour in the fields. Subsistence allowances are being paid to them to alleviate their distress.

103. Reactions to the Bombing of Chittagong Aerodrome, Lawlessness on Burma Border: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... The bombing of the Chittagong aerodrome on 8th and 9th May created considerable apprehension both in Chittagong and in neighbouring districts of Noakhali and Tippera, noticeable particularly in the defection of labourers engaged in military works, who, however, returned to their jobs, though it is reported, in reduced numbers. In Calcutta and the neighbouring industrial areas the effects of this air bombardment were principally noticeable amongst labourers whose homes are in or near the affected areas and whose instinct, upon learning of what had happened and of the exaggerated rumours which were current, was to hurry off to see how their own homes and families had fared.

1. The continued lawlessness on the Burma border of Chittagong has made it necessary to send a further reinforcement of the Eastern Frontier Rifles to Chittagong.... When the civil administration was withdrawn from Akyab a number of Arakanese criminals released from the jail stirred up their compatriots to attack and maim or murder the local Muslims who are mainly Bengalis. These had contrived to arm themselves, primarily, it may be, against apprehended operations by the 'nationalist army' of the Thakin Party, but they naturally turned their attention to the Arakanese in reprisal and the Deputy Commissioner was shot when he was attempting to restore friendly relations between the two communities. Parties of both communities have removed themselves from the Akyab district to parts of Cox's Bazar where they have very greatly complicated the problem of maintaining tranquility.



104. Emergency Measures in Coastal Districts, Clashes between Villagers and Troops: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

1. Emergency measures have been taken in a number of areas. Ordinances II and III of 1942 are now in force in the coastal districts and in Burdwan and Howrah. Measures for the withdrawal of boats and denial of transport have been put into effect in some of the coastal areas; and an Additional Commissioner for the coastal districts has been appointed in order to co-ordinate and expedite the work of District Officers concerned.

2. Reports continue to be received of clashes between villagers and the troops; in Sonua, however, the Commissioner states that the relations between the military and the local inhabitants show an improvement, to which the recent visit of the Chief Minister substantially contributed.

105. Rumours in Punjab: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Punjab for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... The proximity of the bombing of yet another Indian city, though reviving fears of invasion, have nevertheless had the effect of removing to a large extent the feelings of indifference to the outcome of the war hitherto entertained by many urban Hindus, and the satisfaction with which news of Allied successes or Axis reverses is now received indicates that growing numbers of the populace are coming to identify Allied fortunes with their own interests. Meanwhile, the general heightening of apprehension has been accompanied by an increase in the circulation of rumours, of which the most persistent are that India has been mortgaged to the Americans, that newly-constructed wells will be used to store petrol to set alight to towns in pursuance of a scorched earth policy, and that clashes have taken place between British or American and Indian troops at Meerut, Jullundur or Karachi. The last-named rumour, which was particularly widespread, gained considerably in virulence as a result of an unfortunate incident that occurred in Lahore on the 4th of May, when an Indian girl is alleged to have been dragged by a party of British soldiers into a hotel, presumably for immoral purposes. The actual facts relating to this incident are still far from clear, particularly as the girl herself has not been produced, but there is no doubt that a crowd assembled outside the hotel and assaulted a number of British soldiers supposed to have been responsible for the attempted outrage, and the popular belief is that the incident took place as alleged. The subsequent issue of an official communiqué on the subject and the placing of Lahore out of bounds for troops have done much to allay the acute resentment created by this affair, to which undue importance was given both in the press and at a number of Congress meetings convened for the purpose.

In rural areas, there has been little change in the situation. The absence of news of relatives in the Far East, difficulties over the payment of separation allowances, and the return of refugees from Burma contribute to cause depression, but villagers are chiefly concerned at present with the garnering of an ample harvest, and the prevailing outlook is not unduly gloomy.



106. Rumours in Bihar and Inconvenience Due to Troop Movements:
Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of May
1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

1. The War—Although news of the naval victory in the South Pacific and the occupation of Madagascar with signs of the Russians putting up a stout opposition to the renewed German operations in South Russia did produce a heartening effect and the speech of Mr. Churchill which gave clear indications of the growing fighting strength of the Allies and of the preparations to take the offensive was particularly well-received by the public, the bombing of Chittagong and parts of Assam and the continued withdrawal of the British and Chinese troops from Burma are steadily weighing more heavily in the balance with the result that the popular morale is weakening and a spirit of resignation and defeatism is spreading. The usual war activities to secure recruits and to push on A.R.P. measures are making progress without any open or effective opposition. Recruiting is, however, reported to have been adversely affected by occasional silly rumours and by the passage through Bihar of trains containing wounded soldiers returning from Burma.... The speeches of several Congressmen who criticize every branch of the war effort in India, are also regarded as not conducive to public morale. A ticket-collector of the East Indian Railway and a constable of the Santal Parganas District Police are accused of having made efforts to dissuade coolies going by a train to Assam via Madhupur for work connected with military operations from proceeding on their journey. The fortnight under report was free from any serious incident of misbehaviour on the part of any troops and the relations between the troops and the public in the town of Ranchi are reported to have improved though there is some dissatisfaction in the rural areas where troop movements and exercises are said to have caused a certain amount of damage to property and inconvenience to the local population.

107. Panic and Confusion Due to Raids on Imphal: From Fortnightly
Report for Assam for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The raids on Myitkyina, Chittagong and finally Imphal have profoundly affected the situation in Assam. The first details of refugees via the Gauhati route appeared at Silchar on the 4th of May, while the evacuation by air ceased after the 9th May. Events in Burma, by revolutionizing the whole communications plan made it necessary to contemplate an entirely new programme of activity on the civil side. It is understood that the head of the refugee column expected by the new land route will be shortly in sight. Meanwhile, the morale of the province has been put to a severe test by the raids of the 10th and 16th May on Imphal and has not emerged well from it. Telegraphic communications with Imphal is not yet restored and there were at the end of the period no official reports on the effects of the raid, but it is clear that they include an almost complete breakdown in the civil administration of the Manipur State and in communications beyond it. Prima facie it appears likely that the number of persons who stuck to their posts after the second raid were in most departments exiguous, and the accounts of eye-witnesses show that a large and motley stream of labourers probably accompanied by demoralized subordinate officials has been passing down the road. Of the immediate effects

of the raid the most disastrous is that on the refugees at or approaching Imphal. They are now pouring down the road which are not organized for pedestrians; there is transport for only a few and even at Imphal food supplies are seriously threatened. There are still no details of the casualties but the varying reports suggest that the killed may number about 80, of whom 3 were Europeans. The A.R.P. and civil defence measures that had been taken were deficient....

The natural alarm throughout Assam which followed the news of the raid was accentuated by the fact that radio broadcasts in India referred only to a town in Eastern Assam. Rumours have been very widespread and persistent in Shillong, even among the most educated classes, that other places in Assam have been raided. Following the news there has been a considerable rush at the offices of the Motor Services in Shillong and many persons who were unable to secure seats on the buses have spent the night in the yard. In Gauhati apprehensions have been manifested that military camps in the town will lead to an aerial attack affecting the civil population; the Provincial Congress Committee has condemned the action of Government for not being prepared adequately in advance to provide for such an occupation and for admitting troops into a town so defenceless. Generally speaking, therefore, it may be said that the first sharp repercussions of the war on this province have led to a lamentable deterioration in morale from which it will take some time to recover; but given some period of freedom from startling events it is possible that a gradual recovery may take place. The general feeling in respect of the progress of the war, though it is overlaid for the moment by an almost hysterical anxiety about air raids, is probably as good, if not better, than before. The accounts of the methods of the Japanese common soldiery which have been given by wounded troops now in Shillong have not encouraged any readiness to acquiesce in domination by Japan, and the battle of the Coral Sea had aroused a feeling of better confidence. Since the distance from air bases operated by the Japanese has materially decreased, it has been decided to advise parents of children in the Girls' Schools at Shillong that they would be wise to look for other places to which to send them, and also to encourage quietly the departure from Shillong women with children, while this can be carried out in comfort. Meanwhile, however, this intention has been anticipated in several non-Government institutions, which are closing because the pupils have left.

108. Anti-Bengali Feelings in Assam, Hill Tribes Asserting Themselves:
Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the First Half of May
1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

... [T]he example set by the Burmese has encouraged certain young men in Dibrugarh to issue leaflets, purporting to be the work of the 'Young Assamese Revolutionary Party' urging use of the moment to clear out the Bengalis and other foreigners from Assam. A similar facile conclusion that this opportunity might serve the hill tribes to rid themselves of the Bengalis and Assamese, is noticeable at Shillong also.



109. Apprehensions of Salt Shortage in Assam: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

There is much apprehension lest a shortage of salt may develop, and special measures have had to be taken to secure supply. The transport difficult in the Assam Valley, with the Railway virtually closed to supply traffic, with no through communications by road, and only a slow river transport system functioning for civil purposes, must continue to be serious cause of anxiety, but arrangements have now been concluded with a forwarding agency in Calcutta to ensure so far as possible efficiency in the supply of imported goods.

110. Nervousness among Rich Hindus in Sind: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Sind for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Hindus in the richer towns are extremely nervous especially about their money but they are not prepared to invest it towards the furtherance of the war.

111. B.S. Moonje on Guerilla Warfare: Speech Delivered by B.S. Moonje, in Shraddhanand Park, Calcutta, in the Public Meeting Held under the Auspices of the Hindu Students Federation, Calcutta

B.S. Moonje Papers, Speeches and Writings, S. No. 54, NMML.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I desire to speak this evening particularly to the youths of Bengal on the system of Guerilla Warfare. It is the only system of defence against invasion of our country that we can take up immediately and easily situated as we have been during the period of 150 years of the British rule in India. The entire system of the defence of India, since the British rule was established, was made the special and entirely exclusive responsibility of the British. Thus the civil population of India being also subjected to the operation of the Arms Act, was entirely weaned away from war-like mentality and exercises. It is for this reason that H.E. General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief in India, has to wail of the panicky state of mind that has been induced in the civil population at the terrible prospect of invasion of India....

I may respectfully [*sic*] tell His Excellency that this alarm is mostly due not so much to the danger to themselves and their families but to their feeling of utter helplessness in the face of the determination of the Government to still keep the people of India at arm's length from war mentality and fighting exercises. If people feel 'doubt' about the ability of those responsible for their defence to make that defence effective, people cannot be justifiably blamed for it....

.... Now the question is under these limitations of British War-machine, what is to happen to civil population and their properties and industries, if an actual landing in force were to take place at a point far distant from the points where the British soldiers would be stationed. Forceful speed and surprise are the most vital essence of warfare. Here comes an occasion for the civil population to offer a determined resistance to the invader at least until the time the

soldiers of the British Government can move up to meet the invading forces face to face in actual battles. If the civil population be trained for the purpose, they can nip the attempt of the invasion in the bud or scotch it outright or may create all sorts of difficulties in its further progress.

This is what is called the Guerilla warfare. It is a system of warfare which has been found to be most harassing to the enemy though it cannot be expected to bring about its complete defeat by itself. There is no other system to thwart the menace and aggressions of an organized army of invaders.

I may illustrate my point by mentioning a few historic events in the histories of the world. When the Moghul rule was firmly established in India and Aurangzeb, the most powerful and fanatic Emperor of the Mogul line invaded Maharashtra for the purpose of subjugating. The army that he had brought with him was immensely big and well organized and equipped with the weapons of warfare then known. His terrifying army was composed both of cavalry and infantry assisted by powerful guns, the whole of Maharashtra, that is, the whole of the little Swaraj that was brought into being by the skill and bravery of Shivajee the Great, was overrun in no time and his son, Sambhajee who was the then reigning king of the little kingdom of Shivajee was soon taken prisoner and brutally murdered as his captive. The Maharattas, the people of Maharashtra, vowed vengeance. Two young men, Dhanajee Jadhao and Santajee Ghorpade turned up as leaders of their respective Guerilla bands and as the history records wrought havoc in the vast army of Aurangzeb....

This is what is called the Guerilla Warfare. There are several such romantic accounts of feats of valour performed by the Sikhs in their own guerilla warfare against the Mogul empire in the Punjab. Who does not remember the unimaginable feats of Tatya Tope, the Commander of the Peshwa's Army in the war of Independence of 1857? Similarly the name of General Devet is immortal in the history of the World War....

112. Delhi Sikhs Take Measures for Safety of Sikh Population in Delhi: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The local Sikhs have formed a committee of five to devise ways and means to ensure the safety of the Sikh population in Delhi in the event of internal disorder and at a diwan of some five hundred on the 31st May one member of this committee announced that as a first step towards such measures it had been decided to prepare a list of Sikh residents in Delhi. He also appealed for a sum of Rs.50,000/- to provide for stocks of foodstuffs, fuel and kirpans in each Gurdwara.

113. Alarm at Requisition of Land/Buildings: Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

In general improvement in public morale has continued.... On the other hand public opinion is said to be deteriorating in Murshidabad, and in Mymensingh a realistic air raid practice caused some panic. Some alarm has been caused by the requisitioning of land or buildings in various parts, as for instance in Sirajganj (Pabna) for a casualty clearing station. In some parts

also Government's instructions as to the extent to which Government officers will be withdrawn in the event of an enemy invasion or occupation have leaked out and caused apprehension.

2. Criticism comes from many quarters of the policy of withholding details of enemy action in India from District Officers who are thus placed at a disadvantage in dealing with appeals for a categorical denial or confirmation of rumours. It is recognized that it is necessary to deny to the enemy the advantage which he might obtain were details published giving areas bombed from the air, damage caused, etc., but it is suggested that a daily secret summary of facts might be issued to District Officers to be utilised at their discretion in conversation with persons seeking accurate information. At present they are not in a position to deny even the most extravagant rumours as to enemy activity and its results....

3. Anti-war activities continue to be mainly underground. Wide circulation was given to the contents of what purported to be an official communication by a responsible officer of the East Indian railway to the effect that considerable areas in Howrah and Hooghly along the railway line were to be vacated by order of the Military; the source of this fake document is under investigation. Leaflets have also come to light alleging an intention to evacuate Howrah district. In Chittagong rumours of an impending attack by armed Arakanese in three subdivisions led the villagers to assemble themselves and prepare to defend their homes but proved to have been entirely unfounded. In Khulna manuscript posters in English and Bengali called for support for the 'Free India Army' expected under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose from Japan. In Faridpur other leaflets were found calling for the denial of help in the war effort: these purported to be issued by the 'Indian People's Revolutionary Party'. Poorly executed posters, purporting to be issued by a 'Reformist Party' call for continuing an 'uncompromising struggle' with Imperialist Britain and for striking 'a final blow' at her now that she is 'in distress'. Efforts to foment ill-feeling against the military in Feni (Noakhali) have been reported but have been dealt with by a number of prosecutions.

4. Measures for the denial of transport continue in certain coastal areas but difficulties are reported from most districts and as regards boats there is a considerable amount of evasion in the Chittagong Division. Delays have occurred in Bakarganj pending the preparation of schemes for alternative supply routes to be worked out by the steamer companies. In Contai and Tamluk the Congress, whose collaboration in implementing Government's policy was promised when the Minister of Civil Defence co-ordination recently visited that area, is now reported to be misrepresenting the denial policy and causing difficulties. On the other hand in Bakarganj the areas where the denial of boats has been carried out are reported to be adapting themselves to the changed conditions with greater facility than had been expected.

5. Clashes continue to be reported between the troops and the civil population. The improvement in the position at Sonua (Noakhali) mentioned in the last report has received a setback from an incident, as yet not reported in detail but under magisterial investigation, in which a villager was shot dead by a soldier. Incidents have also occurred in Baraset subdivision (24 Parganas): in one of these three soldiers of a Mahratta battalion were injured and in another a villager was killed and several wounded by rifle fire....

17. Unrest is reported both on the East Indian and the Bengal and Assam Railways due to attempts said to have been made to induce employees to sign military bonds against their will, and to reluctance to obey orders of transfer to places in Eastern Assam.



114. Poor Collection of Land Revenue in UP: Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

4. A poor start has been made in the collection of the land revenue, the percentage collected up to May 15 being 7 per cent against 13 per cent, last year. This is undoubtedly due to the reluctance of cultivators to bring their grain to market, which is the result of uncertainty as to the future and the Congress propaganda. They would rather owe their rent than reduce their grain stocks. That the money is there is shown by the fact that the collection of canal dues, which can be collected in a summary manner, is better than at this time last year. Vigorous action to collect the land revenue and compel the cultivator to bring his grain to market is clearly necessary.

115. Spread of 'Defeatism': Extract from Fortnightly Report for the Punjab for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The absence of any startling news directly threatening the safety of India has led to some improvement in public morale, but apathetic defeatism, bred by the defeatist tone of the vernacular press and the insidious propaganda of enemy broadcasts, persists in the towns and to a lesser but increasing extent has penetrated into the villages. Among urban Hindus fear of internal disorder is particularly strong. Muslim opinion is generally staunch but is becoming somewhat perplexed and alarmed at Gandhi's pro-Japanese views and the apparent complacency of Government in allowing him to continue his pernicious and prejudicial propaganda. The enemy's attempt to sap the morale of the people have been helped by Gandhi's defeatist articles in the *Harijan*, an Urdu copy of which is now published in the Punjab by Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, M.L.A. These thinly concealed attempts to weaken the will of the people to resist Japanese aggression found further publicity in two morbid and defeatist speeches made by Jawaharlal Nehru at Lahore and Amritsar in which he discarded the mock heroics of his Assam speeches of doubts and despondency regarding Britain's ability to defend India successfully. The publicity given to Gandhi's and Nehru's anti-British and anti-war views by the Congress-controlled nationalist press has increased the difficulty of developing the National War Front among a naturally fatalistic and apathetic people, but progress has nevertheless been made.

116. 'Defeatism' and Anti-British Feeling in Bihar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

1. The War—There is no improvement to report in the general public feeling. Defeatism and anti-British feeling encouraged by enemy broadcasts and by objectionable speeches are still pronounced. The unfavourable impression caused by the passage of trains through North Bihar containing sick and wounded from the Burma front is now likely to be strengthened by the unexpected return of labour which had only recently been recruited for the military roads in Assam. The incidents that have been reported during the fortnight illustrate the people's reluctance to go anywhere near the war zone and their continued fear at the proximity of

soldiers. At Samastipur, five Indian engine-drivers who had been ordered to take their engines to Kaithar for delivery to the Bengal and Assam Railway and to work them on that railway, refused, together with their firemen and khalasis, to do so, and the engines had to be driven there by British foremen and drivers. At Mandar near Ranchi, the village tank was inspected by a military officer, whereupon some of the villagers promptly drained it for fear that troops might camp in the locality and harass the villagers. According to the District Magistrate of Gaya the general conclusion arrived at by the people is that the Japanese have succeeded in cutting off China from India and that the Burma road which was originally intended to be the life line of China has now become the line of Japanese invasion. The District Officer of Shahabad is the only one to report that public confidence seems to be returning to a certain extent 'as it appears that India may not be made the subject of direct attack and that Russia may win the war sooner than expected.'

117. *The Searchlight* on American Troops in India: Extract from
Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of May 1942
(Extracts from Press)

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The '*Searchlight*' (16.5.42): 'American reinforcements are pouring in. Howsoever welcome, the fact is by no means an unmixed blessing. In the first place, it is galling, indeed, that with a vast man-power waiting to be tapped, we should have to depend on American soldiery to defend India. In the second place, American men, money and material mean sooner than later American influence and India has very good reason to be chary of foreign influences in any shape or form. We do not want further mortgages on the already mortgaged body and soul of India. An Indian Defence Minister could alone rouse drooping spirits and reassure anxious hearts. He would symbolize confidence.'

118. Evacuees in CP and Berar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for
CP and Berar for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... Unofficial estimates place the number of evacuees, who have come to Nagpur from the eastern provinces of India, at about 40,000. A large influx into the eastern districts of repatriated labour from Assam is taking place, and the labourers are reported to be giving graphic, but imaginary, descriptions of their air raid experiences. It is hoped to absorb the bulk of this labour in aerodrome construction work in the province.

119. Acquiring of Educational Institutions for Emergency Services:
Extract from Fortnightly Report for CP and Berar for the Second
Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... Some public criticism was directed at the closing down of the Spence Training College in Jubbulpore and the utilization of the buildings as headquarters of the newly formed armed

Railway Police Battalion. Certain other education institutions in Jubbulpore have also been earmarked, (but not requisitioned), for hospital accommodation and for the Supply Department. Alternative accommodation for earmarked education institutions is, however, being planned out in consultation with the managers of the institutions.

120. More News of Second Air Raid on Imphal and Related Developments: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Assam for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

A second air raid on Imphal in Manipur State took place on the 16th May, the facts only became clear a considerable time later, owing to the breakdown in telegraphic and postal communications ... A number of Railway staff at Manipur Road, Mariani, Tinsukia and Digboi also deserted, and the line is largely managed, it appears, by military personnel. In this raid the Residency was specially singled out for attack, though the damage to the structure was mainly superficial. Casualties were some thirty dead, mainly among travelers by the main road. This completed the depopulation of the town, in which there were numerous fires (some of which must have been due to incendiarism) on the 14th, 15th and 16th, and a good deal of looting. To deal with this there were no resources except military personnel, who eventually commandeered such stocks as could be found in the bazaar.... There were very few casualties in buildings.

A raid was carried out on the 18th over Derby Tea Estate. Damage valued at one lakh was done to estate buildings, and there were about 43 killed among the labouring population, mostly in their houses in the lines. A large number of cattle were killed. Significant points were that had the men been in slit trenches or garden drains at the time the loss would have been negligible, and that the whole garden staff and the labourers (who are long settled, as is common in this neighbourhood) showed some sense and fortitude. They all decamped for some days into the jungle, but there was a general resumption of work on the fourth day after the raid. The purpose of the raid is obscure, but the existence of a trolley line and a factory roof painted aluminium may have led the 18 raiders, which flew high, to suppose that they were attacking a railway station.

The effect on the neighbouring town of Silchar was to reduce the population greatly. This is true of several towns in the Assam valley. Nervousness however appears to be growing less with the subsequent freedom of the province from raids except at Silchar where unidentified aircraft are constantly seen.... It is now commonly said that the exodus from the towns is due to apprehension that property is not safe during the disorganization of air attack ... the rumours of insecurity have been sedulously fostered by subterranean elements through anti-Bengali or anti-‘foreigner’ leaflets, and a poster with a picture of Subhas Bose appeared at places in Sylhet. From one district it is reported that even Assamese people have shown a tendency to migrate, and the idea is unfortunately prevalent that the presence of soldiery is in itself dangerous.

Rumours continue, such as that Gauhati would be bombed on a specific day. Government have issued orders providing for advance to Government servants to enable them to remove their families from anywhere in the province to places which they may consider safer. It has also been necessary, in view of the results of the raids on the morale and esprit de corps of

officials, not only in the menial and subordinate ranks, to issue stringent orders that the normal punishment for dereliction of duty will be dismissal....

121. Popularity of Radio Broadcasts from Tokyo: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

It is reported that an increasing number of people now rely on broadcasts from Tokyo for news rather than on the All India Radio. It is also reported that the news about the bombing of Chittagong, possibly announced over the Tokyo radio, gained currency two days before the official announcement. It is desirable that information of such occurrences should be released as promptly as possible so as to reduce tendency to listen in to enemy broadcasts to obtain the news earlier.

122. M.K. Gandhi on the Question of Withdrawal of Foreign Troops from India, 22 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 241.

.... Neither Britain nor America share my faith in non-violence. I am unable to state that the non-violent effort will make India proof against Japanese or any other aggression. I am not able even to claim that the whole of India is non-violent in the sense required. In the circumstances it would be hypocritical on my part to insist on the immediate withdrawal of the Allied troops as an indispensable part of my proposal. It is sufficient for me to declare that so far as India is concerned, she does not need troops to defend herself, having no quarrel with Japan. But India must not by any act of hers short of national suicide let China down or put the Allied powers in jeopardy. So long therefore as India lacks faith in the capacity of non-violence to protect her against aggression from without, the demand for the withdrawal of the Allied troops during the pendency of the war would itself be an act of violence, if the controllers of the troops hold it to be necessary for their defence to keep them in India for that purpose and that alone.

123. Rehabilitation of Burma Evacuees: Letter from General Secretary, Delhi PCC, to General Secretary, AICC, 21 June 1942

AICC Papers F. No. G-31 (Part 1)/1942, NMML.

Dear Sir,

.... I have to inform you that Indians who were employed in the Burma Railways are in a sad plight here. The Indian Overseas Department pays no attention to them and the Hon'ble member-in-charge of whom some thing better was expected has no time to see them.

Some non-official agencies are giving all possible assistance to the evacuees but the information relating to their office can only be furnished by the Government. The result has been that the evacuees are being treated like shuttle-cocks.

I am bringing these facts to your notice in the hope that the attention of the Government and the public may be drawn to the inequities under which the Indian evacuees are still

labouring while the Anglo-Indians and the so called Anglo-Burmans are being treated with all attention.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/

General Secretary,
Provincial Congress Committee, Delhi

124. For Middlemen: M.K. Gandhi to Merchants, 7 July 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 280–1.

I am having pathetic letters from a number of people bitterly complaining about grain merchants. The substance of these letters is, '[W]hy should we serve these merchants when they will not sell grain, though they have the stock, unless we pay prices higher than those fixed by the Government and in every case at prices beyond our reach? What is there left for us but to starve or loot?'

The complaint is just and universal. The Government is no doubt most answerable for this state of things. They have sent out grain and they do not know how to deal with the stock there is in the country. Prices must be regulated and there must be grain offices like post offices where people can buy grain like stamps. But people cannot starve while Government are learning wisdom. It is therefore the duty of the whole mercantile community to take the matter into their own hands and ensure a regular supply of grain to the poor at reasonable rates. The Government can't interfere with any such humanitarian effort. It will be a real help to them if the merchants perform what is their obvious duty. This requires voluntary co-operation of the whole mercantile community of India. But the beginning must be made with the provinces or even districts. The matter brooks no delay. Hunger knows no law and bread—or rather grain—riots are sure to break out all over the country if energetic benevolent measures are not taken in time.

SEVAGRAM, July 7, 1942

Harijan, 12-7-1942

125. Comprehensive Statement on the Scorched Earth Policy Overdue:
Bihar Chamber of Commerce's Demand

The Tribune, 30 July 1942.

Patna, July 28

The Bihar Chamber of Commerce, in a communication addressed to the Defence Department, Government of India, state that while the committee of the Chamber appreciates the declaration that it is not the intention of Government to follow a policy of general destruction which is generally understood by the term scorched earth, it stresses that a comprehensive statement on the policy to be pursued in this regard is overdue.

The committee quotes the statement of the Governor of Burma that all properties were destroyed and not only buildings but the whole national life of Burma would have to be built and observes that the notion betrays complete disregard for the fate of the civil population left

behind. The committee further observes that War Risks (Factories and Goods) Insurance Scheme does not affect the Chamber's objection to the adoption of the policy in India for the Chamber cannot agree to the equitableness of a procedure involving burdens on the already heavily burdened Indian taxpayers for the consequences of any panicky policy of the administration which is not responsible to the people.

'The committee agrees to the "scorching" of arms and ammunition factories only and that the demolition of other industrial plants will be ruinous not only to the immediate but the long term economic interests of the country and once the economic and social fabric built up through the efforts of centuries is severely impaired the problem of restoration will not be easy, as is visualized in some circles and the mere repayment of the financial losses will not solve the problem of the reconstruction of the national life anew.'

126. Anxiety at High Prices: Excerpt from Fortnightly Report for Bengal for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... The 'Grow More Food' campaign is proceeding and progress or a prospect of success is reported in several districts, though the apprehension that it may have been started too late is expressed by the Dacca Commissioner. Prices continue to be high and kerosene and salt give special cause for anxiety. Profiteering is difficult to detect and to prevent or punish. The Dacca District Magistrate has made an experiment by appointing no less than 4,000 honorary price controllers throughout his district. There is little reported discontent, though Krishak Samitis have been acting in Tamluk (Midnapore) where they are reported to have been preventing the sale of paddy in accordance with the denial policy and interfering with the execution of processes; from the same district an incident of *hat* looting is reported.

127. Serious Grain Situation in UP: Extract from Fortnightly Report for UP for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Although the average price of wheat throughout the Province fell during the first fortnight of May and wheat at Hapur remained steady, the price of every other food grain rose. The prices of *gur* and salt also rose.

The grain situation in the towns continues to be serious. Cultivators ... are slow in bringing their grain to market and the general idea that, as the control rate was raised just when the crop was coming into the market, so a fortiori it will have to be raised when prices usually rise has naturally made dealers reluctant to sell or even to disclose their stocks. The prohibition of export from some districts has eased the local situation and resulted in a fall in price, but the situation, if not yet critical, is distinctly dangerous and it looks as if very troublous times are ahead.



128. Letter from Surendra, Rae Bareilly, to Jawaharlal Nehru, Dated 4 June 1942, about Problems in the District and the Hard-Heartedness of the Local Authorities

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 97, NMML.

Respected Panditji,

The conditions in this district has deteriorated a great deal. Two aerodromes are being erected here. Consequently, the tenants of several villages have lost their everything. No arrangements for their houses or fields has been made. The worst thing is that some 2400 carts have been forcibly taken by the Government with the result that agricultural work of many tenants has come to a standstill. The inhuman way in this respect will be apparent by the following example. One blind old man whose one son was in the military and the other two in Police was brought to the Tahsil for the cart. There he got a wire of his son's death who was in the military. He had his old wife in his house. He was bitterly weeping. But without any consideration his cart was seized. I am going to make a detailed enquiry and also see the authorities and then let you know the details. Please advise me on what to do in these areas.

Please accept my Pranams to yourself,

Yours affectionately,

Surendra

129. Shortages of Essential Items in Bihar: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

There is likely to be considerable discontent in certain towns owing to the curtailment in the supply of electrical energy.... [T]here is serious shortage of Kerosene oil in several districts. There is also reported to be great dearth of common salt and washing soda practically all over the province.

130. From General Secretary, Mahakoshal Provincial Congress Committee, to General Secretary, AICC, 20 June 1942: Province in Grip of Severe Famine

AICC Papers, F. No. P-12/1942-45, NMML.

Dear Sir,

You are perhaps aware that ours is the province which is in the grip of severe famine. The scarcity of wheat and other foodstuffs have been acute and the people here do not even get the requisite quantity of grain to meet their daily requirements. Congressmen in the province, though, are making efforts to soothe and meet the situation but it is upto the Govt. to handle the situation timely which has hitherto been showing apathy. Owing to the Congress agitation and public pressure the local authorities seem to have moved now and are forming local Grain Control Committees in the districts. They are seeking the cooperation of the Congressmen and inviting them to serve on such committees.

Several of our Congress Committees have been seeking our advice and awaiting for definite directions, whether congressmen as such can serve on such committees or not. We have, taking into consideration, the grave situation, advised them to serve on the committees in their individual capacity and not as the representatives of the Congress. Meanwhile we request you to kindly direct us, whether Congressmen can serve on such committee as members and office-bearers of the local Congress Committees or in their individual capacity, at an early date and oblige.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- For General Secretary

131. Resolution Passed at Bombay PCC Meeting, 17 July 1942—
Re: Situation Arising Out of the Abnormal Rise in the Prices of
Foodstuffs and Other Essential Commodities

AICC Papers, F. No. P-7/1942, NMML.

The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee has watched with deep concern and anxiety the abnormal and unconscionable rise—which is daily mounting up—in the prices of food-stuff and other essential commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar and kerosene, resulting in want and misery especially to the poorer sections of the city's population. Transport difficulties and inequitable methods of distribution of the controlled commodities have further added to the seriousness of the situation. While fully sympathizing with the people of Bombay in their daily growing difficulties in this connection, the Committee must point out that the non-official organizations, however powerful they may be, can do very little in relieving the situation without the full and effective co-operation of Government. The measures undertaken by Government to control the export, distribution and prices of these essential commodities have inevitably tended to create panicky conditions in the market, thereby upsetting the normal laws of supply and demand. The Committee is of opinion that 'control' by itself will not help in improving the conditions in the market unless Government takes immediate steps to provide necessary facilities of transport, maintain an adequate supply of these essential commodities in the city and make this supply available to wholesale and retail dealers in sufficient quantities to meet the normal demands of consumers at reasonable and economic prices. The vicious circle in which the market is moving at present due to unnatural restrictions on the one hand and unchecked profiteering on the other, must at once be put an end to by rearranging distribution of essential commodities on a scientific and equitable basis. Small retailers who sell commodities to the large mass of consumers must get adequate supplies at controlled prices so that they can be compelled in turn to sell them at controlled retail prices.

The Committee strongly supports the stand taken by the Bombay Municipal Congress Party in demanding a non-official body to be called the 'Food-Council' composed of the representatives of Government, commercial interests and consumers to efficiently handle the food-problem of the city. The Committee hopes that the Government will readily respond to this constructive proposal in the interests of the large body of consumers in this city. The Committee further commends the efforts of the Corporation to give relief to consumers by employing the Municipal funds to the tune of a crore of rupees, if that course became necessary, to set up a Municipal organization to obtain supplies from the sources available and to regulate their distribution in the retail sales.

132. M.K. Gandhi: 'Produce Khadi', 2 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 352-3.

You should apply the slogan 'Grow more food' which we hear everywhere to khadi also. If we do not produce khadi crores of people will be compelled to remain naked just as if we do not produce food crores of people will die of starvation—and the number will be much larger than the number of those dying in war. The only difference will be that in the war they die knowingly and they are honoured as heroes while no one remembers those who die of starvation. And they die because of our ignorance and lethargy.

We shall not die for want of clothes, but we would not like to remain naked either. If the war is prolonged the mills will cease to function [as at present]. They will produce war material.

How can then khadi be produced? I have already said that at the moment we can get the yarn produced not by hired labour but by plying the charkha voluntarily in every home. If we keep an account of every minute and put that to good use, there will never be a scarcity of cloth. Since the yarn given to us as a gift will definitely be cheaper than that produced by hired labour, the khadi will also be comparatively cheaper.

[From Hindi]

Chapter 12. Allahabad AICC Meeting and Preparations for Quit India

1. THE BUILD-UP TO THE ALLAHABAD MEETING

1. M.K. Gandhi to Vallabhbhai Patel, 13 April 1942, about Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 31.

Jawaharlal now seems to have completely abandoned ahimsa.

You should go on doing what you can. Restrain the people if you can.

His speech¹ reported today seems terrible. I intend to write to him.

Blessings from
BAPU

¹ Nehru, in an interview to the Press on 12 April 1942, had advised the people in the event of a Japanese invasion to resort to the Scorched Earth Policy and guerilla warfare. See *SWJN*, 12, p. 223.

2. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel, 14 April 1942, Advising Him on His Future Course of Action
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 36.

Bhai Vallabhbhai,

Again there has been no letter from you. The Professor [J.B. Kripalani] has given me a detailed account [of the discussions with Cripps]. If you are not well do not go to Allahabad. But you must let them know your views. If the Congress adopts the policy of violence, I think you should resign. This is not the time for anybody to suppress his views and keep quiet. Things are going the wrong way in most matters. It does not seem proper for one to remain a silent spectator of them. It is immaterial whether one is praised or blamed.

I should like you to read carefully what I have been writing in *Harijan*. In Orissa while on the one hand the Communists are said to be preparing for a guerilla war, on the other hand members of the Forward Bloc are said to be preparing to help Japan. Both these are rumours. Nothing is known for certain. But both things are possible.

An attack on Orissa seems quite likely. The Government has massed a large number of troops there....

Blessings from
Bapu

3. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Mridula Sarabhai, 14 April 1942, Advising Her to Follow Jawaharlal Nehru

CWMG, Vol. 94 (Supplementary Volume 4), p. 94.

Chi. Mridu,

I have received your letter. I am a little afraid that Jawaharlal and I are beginning to follow different paths. You will have noticed it.

In such a situation, I shall not have you swing between two viewpoints. I advise you to follow Jawaharlal. My days are now numbered. My views appear in Harijan. Balance them against other views, but where your own mind does not work, follow Jawaharlal....

Blessings from
Bapu

4. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 15 April 1942, about the Differences Between the Two of Them

CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 40.

Chi. Jawaharlal,

The Professor [J.B. Kripalani] is here. He has told me everything. I also heard about your Press interview. Whereas we have always had differences of opinion it appears to me that now we also differ in practice. What can Vallabhbhai and others do in such a situation? If your policy is accepted the Committee should not retain its present shape. The more I think of it the more I feel that you are making a mistake. I see no good in American troops entering India and in our resorting to guerrilla warfare.

It is my duty to caution you.

I hope Indu and Feroze are well.

Blessings from
BAPU



5. M.K. Gandhi to C. Rajagopalachari, 17 April 1942, Asking Him to Spend a Day in Sevagram
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 44.

My dear C.R.,

So you could not give me a day!!! Supposing you had to give one more day to Delhi. But you know best what to do at a given moment. I hope you will find at least a day for Sevagram on your way to Allahabad.

Love,
BAPU

6. M.K. Gandhi to S. Satyamurti, 17 April 1942, about Congress Policy and How to Bring About Hindu-Muslim Understanding
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 44.

Dear Satyamurti,

Your letter.

I am doing all I can in the way of showing the non-violent approach to the pending menace. But I am helpless if the Congress policy changes from moment to moment.

I do not know how Hindu Muslim understanding can be brought about. Our meeting can be easily brought about. I have only to walk to his place. Having gone there what am I to do or say? If I know that, I would go. There seems to be no meeting ground....

Yours sincerely
M.K. Gandhi

7. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, 19 April 1942, Expressing His Unwillingness to Go to Allahabad
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 53.

Chi. Jawaharlal,

A letter from the Maulana arrived today. He writes that I have to go to Allahabad. How can I go? I had said even when I was there that I was not any more fit for travel. And what shall I do by going there? I have the same one thing to offer and I have called three meetings here. One of them has been planned for a long time. I cannot miss any of them. You must therefore excuse me. Write to Maulana to spare me.

Blessings from
Bapu



8. M.K. Gandhi to Maulana Azad, 19 April 1942, Asking to Be Excused from the Allahabad Meeting

CWMG, Vol. 94 (Supplementary Volume 4), p. 94.

Maulana Saheb,

I have your letter. I will write to you only in Urdu. This time you will forgive me. I had already told you in Delhi that now my health does not permit me to move around. Moreover I do not have any work there and I have convened three meetings here which I must attend. People from faraway places have been invited. You will understand my position and excuse me for my absence.

Yours

M.K. Gandhi

9. Rajendra Prasad's Appeal to Students of Bihar, Patna, 20 April 1942

The National Herald, 21 April 1942.

A fervent appeal to students not to keep aloof in these critical days but to come forward and join in the great task of organizing people and be of service to them at the time of emergency, was made by Dr. Rajendra Prasad addressing a meeting last evening of the students held on the University grounds.

.... In outlining the programme of works for students in the course of his long speech, he stressed on the need of organizing volunteer corps for civil defence in various parts of the country who could do yeoman service to the people by educating them in the matter of self-defence and self-sufficiency.

10. From S. Satyamurti to M.K. Gandhi, 22 April 1942, about Congress Policy and the Need to Meet Jinnah

K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 352-4.

My dear Mahatmaji,

.... I know you are doing all you can in the way of showing a non-violent approach to the impending menace. I also feel that the Congress policy is not very definite. I think the official Congress policy is that we cannot defend the country unless we are put in power and are thus enabled to do so. It was with that purpose that the Congress made the Poona offer and then passed the Bardoli resolution which was confirmed at Wardha. As far as I can see there is no intention on the part of the government to part with real power to the people of India. Their excuses are many and varied. But their intention is clear. A miracle may happen and they may yet part with power. But if they do not, speaking for myself, I cannot follow the speeches, for example, of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or of Sri Rajagopalachari. The former says that we must defend India against Japan even as China is doing. The latter says that if he were given an emergency commission, although he is an old man of sixty, he will defend Madras. Frankly, I am unable to follow these sentiments. Apart from violence or non-violence, unless these gentlemen are put in power and have the government of the country in their hands, I do

not know what they can do. I recognize fully that Indians cannot and ought not to submit to Japanese aggression, but taking an objective and realistic point of view, I am convinced that unless we are put in power, the only thing we can do is to practice nonviolent non-co-operation against the aggressor, and even that, as you have written in the *Harijan*, when authorized military operations are not going on. I wonder how many will be found brave enough and self-sacrificing enough to practice even this non-violent non-co-operation. But whatever others may do, the duty of those who claim to be leaders of the people is absolutely clear. We must resist Japanese aggression whatever the cost may be by non-violent non-co-operation....

As for your meeting Mr. Jinnah I quite recognise the force of what you write, but if there is to be no settlement and we have got to face the coming weeks, months or years, critical and dangerous as it may well be. I suggest that your and Mr. Jinnah meeting will by itself have a great effect on the people of this country. Even if nothing comes out of it, I think that gesture would be appreciated undoubtedly by the people of the country. For, after all, we have to depend ultimately on reasonable minded Muslims agreeing with the reasonable minded Hindus who work for the freedom of the country and live as friends in a free India. Moreover, I tentatively suggest to you that when you meet Mr. Jinnah, you will ask him to co-operate with you and with the Congress on behalf of the Muslim League, keeping high questions of policy apart, for keeping internal order and promoting a programme of self-sufficiency and self-reliance during the coming difficult period. Of course, I must leave it to you. I only pray that God may give you the light to do this service, which is supremely needed in this hour of crisis by the people of this country. I look forward to the pleasure of meeting you in Allahabad. I hope you will come.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

S. Satyamurti

11. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel, 22 April 1942, Asking Him to Be Firm at Allahabad

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 61-2.

Bhai Vallabhbhai,

I have your letter. Maulana's wire would seem to leave you no choice but to go, though it does not seem to me advisable for you to do so. Be firm. If they do not adopt an unambiguous resolution of non-violent non-co-operation, your duty will be to resign. You must also oppose the scorched-earth policy and any suggestion to invite foreign troops. They are pressing me to attend but I have categorically refused. I have already fixed three or four meetings here at about the same time. The main meeting was fixed long ago. It cannot be shifted now.

Drop in here on your way back from Prayag even if it be only for a day or two. It is a hundred times better here than in Prayag. Bring along Rajendra Babu, too, and Deo [Shankarrao] also ...

Blessings from

Bapu



12. M.K. Gandhi's Draft for Working Committee's Resolution, before 24 April 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 63–5.

Whereas the British Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

The AICC is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. The policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the War has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The A.I.C.C. is therefore of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace, to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

The Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her nonviolent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-cooperation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of nonviolent non-cooperation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor or obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our non-cooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our non-cooperation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-cooperation when they are actually fighting it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-cooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves, a position we can never accept.

It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our nonviolent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, & c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst noncooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this national building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either nonviolence or violence.

Foreign Soldiers

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth to stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British imperialism is.

13. Draft Revised by Rajendra Prasad for Working Committee,
Allahabad, 27 April 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 276-84.

Whereas the British war Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of distrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives, and India rendered incapable of defending herself.

India's participation in the War has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were free she would wish to keep out of the War, her sympathies with victims of aggression notwithstanding. India would know also how to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The plea that the British should remain in India for protecting the Indian Prince is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would solve itself on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of India's safety and for cause of world peace, to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

India bears no enmity towards any foreign nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. In her fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. Her past experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. She therefore hopes that the British Government as also other foreign nations will remove their legions and henceforth their stop their further introduction. They know fully well that there is inexhaustible manpower in India which remains untapped on account of the policy of distrust of the Indian people by the British Government. India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. India having no quarrel with Japan or any other nation, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if in spite of this Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to her appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent noncooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them.

We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.

We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.

If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

In places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacles in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. Judging from their attitude, the British Government does not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help as slaves, a position we can never accept.

If, in spite of our nonviolent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Direct noncooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited. Its complete and lasting success and also the true building up of Swaraj depend on the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe

out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom in terms of the masses must remain a dream and unattainable by either violence or non-violence.

14. The Resolutions Proposed by the Madras Congress Committee for the AICC Meeting

AICC Papers, F. No. G-32/1942, NMML.

Congress and Muslim League

(a) The All India Congress Committee notes with deep regret that the attempts to establish a National Government for India to enable her to face the problems arising out of the present grave situation have failed and that as a result of this, Nationalist India has been placed in a dilemma. It is impossible for the people to think in terms of neutrality or passivity during an invasion by an enemy power. Neither is it practicable to organise an effective defence, independently and unco-ordinated with the defence measures of the Government. It is absolutely and urgently necessary in the best interests of the country at this hour of peril to do all that Congress can possible do to remove every obstacle in the way of establishment of a national administration to face the present situation; and, therefore, inasmuch as the Muslim League has insisted on the recognition of the right of separation of certain areas from United India upon the ascertainment of the wishes of the people of such areas, as a condition precedent for united national action at this moment of grave national danger, the A.I.C.C. is of opinion that to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a National Government at this grave crisis for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is a most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil and acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation, should the same be persisted in when the time comes for framing a constitution for India and thereby remove all doubts and fears in this regard, and to invite the Muslim League for a consultation for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing the installation of National Government to meet the present emergency.

K. Santanam

Tamil Nadu

Formation of Popular Government in Madras

(a) Whereas the Presidency of Madras has been seriously affected by the conditions resulting from the Japanese aggression and the lives of the people are subjected to growing dislocation and it is suicidal for the present and disastrous for the future, for the people's representatives to remain passive and allow the present authoritarian administration to function under such circumstances, and whereas it is desirable to make every effort to secure such conditions as may enable the people effectively to offer resistance to the aggressor and inspire them for all the sacrifice involved in the defence of the mother-land, the All India Congress Committee authorizes the Congress Legislative Party in Madras to accept responsibility of Government if invited to do so, and further advises them to invite the Muslim League to participate in such responsibility and assist in the formation of a popular government for the province.

15. Maulana Azad's Telegram to C. Rajagopalachari, 27 April 1942,
about His Recent Attitude

C. Rajagopalachari Papers, Roll No. 2, Microfilm, NMML.

Your recent attitude much astonished and pained me stop it is total denial of congress discipline stop it was unthinkable that a member working committee would move against declared congress policy you have forced me for disciplinary action stop personal relations cannot hinder from duty please wire explanation stop putting your case before next meeting.

Abul Kalam Azad

16. Reactions of Maulana Azad and Rajendra Prasad to the Madras
Resolutions

The National Herald, 26 April 1942.

Azad Deplores Madras Decision

C.R.'s 'Astonishing' Attitude

Only P.C.C. Can Voice Provincial Views

Rajen Babu Condemns Perverse Move

Calcutta, 25 April

'It greatly astonished and pained me that a man like Mr. Rajagopalachari, in spite of his being a member of the Congress Working Committee, should have adopted such an attitude', says the Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in a statement on the resolution passed by the Madras Congress Legislature Party.

He adds 'I am in communication with him. I would assure you that any personal relationship however dear to me cannot deter me for a moment from discharging my duty as President of the Congress.

'I may point out in this connection that in the Congress organization only the provincial Congress committee is the competent body to represent provincial views—not the Congress Legislature Party. Despite this fact, the party itself was not fully represented in the meeting.

'The information about the meeting indicates that out of 191 Congress members of both the Houses only 52 attended the meeting, and when votes were taken, only 26 participated in the voting. It clearly shows that it would be wrong to attribute the decision to the majority of the Congressmen in the province.'

Rajan Babu's View

It was wrong to attribute to the Congress as a whole or even the Congressmen of the Madras Presidency the opinion of the members of the Madras Legislative Party, observed Mr. Rajendra Prasad, a member of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee in an interview.



17. Congress Working Committee (CWC) Stand on the Madras Resolutions and C. Rajagopalachari's Letter of Resignation: From Proceedings of CWC, Allahabad, 27 April and 1 May 1942

Indian National Congress, March 1940 to September 1946: Being the Resolutions Passed by the Congress, the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee, Allahabad, n.d., pp. 115–16.

The Madras Resolutions

The Committee considered the two resolutions passed by the Madras Legislature party under the presidency of Shri Rajagopalachariar. The President observed that the resolutions passed by the Madras Legislature were at variance with the declared policy of the Congress. As a responsible member of the Working Committee Shri Rajagopalachariar should have avoided all association with the two resolutions. If he felt strongly on the subject he should have discussed the matter with his colleagues of the Working Committee before giving expression to his views. In the event of his being unable to carry the Working Committee with him, it was open to him to resign and then propagate his views. Shri Rajagopalachariar admitted that knowing as he did the views of his colleagues of the Working Committee on the subject, he should have first talked the matter over with them before moving the two resolutions at the Congress Assembly Party in Madras. He was, however, unable to withdraw the two resolutions as they represented his considered view. In his letter of resignation addressed to the President, he expressed his regret for publicly ventilating his views on a highly controversial question before consulting the President. Following is the full text of his letter to the President.

19, Edmonstone Road,
Allahabad
April 30, 1942

Dear Maulana Sahib,

With reference to your observations on the resolutions passed on my motion by the Madras Congress Legislature Party, I admit that I should have talked the matter over with you and other colleagues of the Working Committee before moving the resolutions, knowing as I did their disagreement on the subject. I write this to express my regret.

I have explained to you already how strongly I feel. I believe that I should be failing in my duty if I do not endeavour to get people to think and act in the direction which my conviction leads to. I feel that in the public interest I should move the resolutions already notified by Mr. Santanam. I desire, therefore to request you to permit me to resign my place in the Working Committee.

Let me tender my grateful thanks for the unqualified trust and affection bestowed on me by you and the other colleagues during all these many years that I have served in the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

C. RAJAGOPALACHARIAR

The President regretfully accepted the resignation of Shri Rajagopalachariar from the Working Committee.

18. AICC Draft Resolutions, 29 April 1942, about Refugees and Evacuees and the Behaviour of Soldiers

AICC Papers, F. No. G-19 (Part 5)/1942, NMML.

1. Evacuated Lands and the Behaviour of Soldiers

The attention of the All India Congress Committee has been drawn to various orders passed by Government of the military authorities for the evacuation of certain areas in the country. Such evacuation is often necessary in times of war for reasons of military necessity or the safety of the population in a particular area. But it is recognized practice that no such orders should be passed, except in cases of sudden and extreme urgency, without making suitable arrangements and without even giving reasonable and sufficient time to the people concerned to do so and, in any event, without every facility of transport and adequate compensation. It appears that no such facilities have been provided and in many cases no compensation, or totally inadequate compensation, has been given. Some orders have demanded evacuation from an area within twenty four hours, thus making it impossible for families to do anything but to walk out, camp under the trees, become destitute and starve. No government, worth the name, should allow this to happen, and even from the military point of view, such happenings are highly undesirable as they lead to widespread resentment among the people.

The Committee has also noted with dismay that frequent and well authenticated reports have been received of the molestation of women by soldiers in railway trains and evacuated and other places. These have already led to disastrous consequences, including the shooting of people who resisted in some places, and there is a growing and widespread feeling of deep resentment, especially at the inability of any authority to take effective measures to prevent these happening or to punish the culprits. The civil authority appears to be powerless and the military authority disinclined to intervene. The Committee trusts that immediate steps will be taken to check and put an end to this molestation which must be resisted by the people at all costs.

2. The Lesson of Rangoon and Lower Burma

The Committee has noted the recent extraordinary happenings in Lower Burma, and notably in the city of Rangoon, when, though actual military operations were still some distance away, the whole civil administration suddenly collapsed and those in charge of it sought their own safety and abandoned their posts just when their presence was most needed. Private motor cars were commandeered for the evacuation of high officials and Europeans, leaving their owners stranded and unprovided for. The police force was discharged or withdrawn to other places, habitual and other criminals were released from prisons, and the lunatics allowed to go out of their asylums. The city of Rangoon was thus left not only without any civil administration but at the mercy of lunatics, hardened criminals, and other anti-social elements. Even previously, at the time of the air raids, it had been evident that the A.R.P. organization did not function and no thought had been given to the problem of organized evacuation, food supply or shelter. A situation was thus created which involved the citizens of Rangoon in utmost misery and desolation, and which was discreditable in the extreme to the Government and its high officials.

As war approaches India, the lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma are full of meaning for this country, for the same type of official wields authority here, and the recent astonishing exhibition of panic and incompetence in Madras demonstrates the dangers arising from

inefficient and irresponsible officials, who have, in addition, no contacts with the people of the country. Recent orders passed and circulars issued on behalf of various Provincial Governments indicate that they are obsessed with making provision for the safety of the higher civil officials, and their removal from places of immediate danger. Little thought appears to have been given to the drawing up of well prepared schemes for possible evacuation of a particular area, and the arrangement of transport, housing and food supply in a time of emergency. It is the misfortune of India, at this crisis in her history, not only to have a foreign government, but a government which is incompetent and incapable of organizing her defence properly or of providing for the safety and essential needs of her people.

As no reliance can be placed on the Central or Provincial Governments functioning in India now to act effectively and intelligently in times of emergency, it becomes the especial duty of the people to rely upon and organize themselves for this purpose. The Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection is the essential foundation for self-reliance and the avoidance, as far as possible, of many of the evils that follow in the train of war. On this programme, therefore, the people must concentrate themselves. In the larger cities where special problems arise, schemes should be worked out, with the help of experts, in regard to food supply and the other measures that may be necessary in time of emergency. In particular, all panic should be avoided even though those in authority give way to it.

3. Evacuees and Refugees from Malaya and Burma

The All India Congress Committee has noted with indignation the arrangements made for, and the treatment accorded to, evacuees and refugees from Malaya and Burma to India. The officials, whose business and duty it was to protect the lives and interests of the people in their respective areas, utterly failed to discharge that responsibility, and, running away from their post of duty, sought safety for themselves, leaving the vast majority of the people wholly uncared and unprovided for. Such arrangements for evacuation as were made were meant principally for the European population and at every step racial discrimination was in evidence. Because of this and also because of the utter incompetence, callousness and selfishness of those in authority, vast numbers of Indians in Malaya and Burma have not only lost all they possessed but have also undergone unimaginable sufferings, many dying on the way from lack of the necessities of life, from disease, or from attacks from anti-social elements.

Racial discrimination was shown at the base camps in Burma where special arrangements were made for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans while Indians were left almost uncared for; in the according of special facilities for transport and travel to the Europeans and Eurasians; and in the general treatment given to Indians and non-Indians along the routes and at the various camps. In particular, this was in evidence in the scandal of a safer and more convenient route being practically reserved for non-Indians, while Indians were forced to travel by a longer, more difficult and more dangerous route.

The committee is aware that recently some alterations have been made in these arrangements and that Indians are now being brought over by air from Myitkyina, and can also avail themselves of the safer land route in limited numbers. The treatment of the evacuees and refugees on the Indian side of the border though somewhat better now is still far from satisfactory. But from all reports the conditions at the base camps for evacuees in Burma are highly unsatisfactory and the worst sufferers there are Indians. The committee calls upon the Government of India to make all necessary arrangements for the speedy evacuation from the

unoccupied zone in Burma of all Indians who wish to be evacuated. Suitable Indians, official and non-official, should be appointed to supervise and look after the interests of the Indians in the base and other evacuation camps and on all routes used by the evacuees. The Committee trusts that non-official relief agencies will be permitted to send workers and doctors all along the Manipur route from Dimapur to Tamu and beyond to the base camp on the Burma side, as well as to Myitkyina, which is the air base for refugees.

The problem of the evacuees and refugees from Burma is not solved by merely bringing them to India. Every effort should be made to find suitable work for them in existing establishments or on the land, by regular semi-permanent camps should be started where productive work for wages is organized.

The Committee expresses its appreciation of the fine service rendered to the evacuees by various non-official relief organizations and by their voluntary workers. The Committee calls upon the Indian public to extend all possible help to the evacuees, and particularly all employers to provide employment for as many of them as possible. The Committee also extends its warm welcome to all those Indians who have returned to the homeland in these distressing circumstances and assures them of its deep sympathy and anxious interest in their cause.

19. Telegram R No. 7712, 30 April (Received 1 May), from Secretary of State for India to Governor-General regarding the Prohibitory Orders against the Publication of the CWC Resolutions of 28 April

GOI Home Political File No. 4/2/42, NAI.

Important

Parliamentary question for Thursday May 7th asks 'Why publication of the resolution passed on April 28th 1942 by Working Committee of the Indian National Congress was banned and all printers, publishers and editors were prohibited from publishing whole or any part of the resolution'. I presume this is based on a press report which states resolution dealt with evacuation of Rangoon. Please report facts and advise reply.

20. Telegram R No. 3444 from Governor-General to Secretary of State, 30 April 1942, about the CWC Resolutions of 28 April and Prohibitory Orders against Their Publication

GOI Home Political File No. 4/2/42, NAI.

Important

Continuation our No. 3443

Text of resolutions was submitted by Associated Press for Press advice and after due consideration of possible consequences we decided every possible step should be taken to prevent publication of whole of first resolution and that portion of second which deals with alleged molestation of women by soldiers. Remainder of second resolution and whole of third, although objectionable, were passed for publication. It seemed to us that deliberate object of resolutions was to bring Government into hatred and contempt, to undermine public confidence in Government's

ability to defend India, to excite hostility against armed forces British and Indian on whom safety of country depends, and to encourage establishment of parallel administration. Mere advice against publication would have been ineffective and immediate action was necessary. We therefore issued general prohibitory orders under Defence Rule 41 (1) (b) and warned all Provincial Governments to take action against defiance of orders. Prohibitory orders seem to have been generally effective although in some places they were not in time to prevent summaries of resolutions from appearing.

We realize that our action may provoke conflict with larger section of Press and possibly with Congress itself. We cannot however hold our hands indefinitely and we are convinced that time has come to stem the flood of seditious and defeatist utterances with which Congress are endeavouring to cover their failure over Cripps' Mission. Impression may have been caused outside India that Congress have adopted policy of non-embarrassment, if not of active support for war effort, but in spite of some professions to this effect, which have been given exaggerated publicity, position is for otherwise. True temper of Congress is revealed by these resolutions, general effect of which should, we consider, be given full publicity in England and America.

21. Newspaper Report on the AICC Session at Allahabad

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 April 1942.

Allahabad, April 29

The All-India Congress Committee began its meeting this evening in the open amphitheatre at Tagore town. Some hundred members and over a thousand visitors were present. The amphitheatre was simple but elegantly decorated with Congress Tricolour flags, big and small, fluttering from some fifty poles planted around the meeting place.

.... Maulana Azad in his opening speech said: 'Last time we met at Wardha on January 15. Three months have passed. The war is now drawing closer to India and both the fronts of India—the land and sea frontiers—are now threatened. Singapore, which was supposed to be an impregnable base has fallen. Then came Rangoon's turn. War is now touching our shores. Where do we find ourselves in this changing shape of things?

.... 'The British attitude towards the Indian situation ever since the outbreak of the war has been such that we find ourselves in a difficult position. We have made it clear to the country to the world at large that if ever a conciliatory spirit was necessary for a settlement, we showed it. We went far in our efforts—in fact too far to secure a settlement, but it is clear that the British Government have no trust in us. They are not prepared to leave our Defence in our own hands. This is a question of national self-respect.

A necessary concomitant of the position taken up in relation to the Cripps' proposals was that we would be prepared to participate actively in war. It is also known that some members of the Working Committee are with Mahatma Gandhi in their support of out and out non-violence. But I am proud to say that throughout the two weeks of our negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, they took up a wonderfully conciliatory attitude and they made it clear that they would consistently with their position of non-violence do their best to assist us. I have nothing but praise for them and I want to make it clear that our decisions were unanimous' (cheers).

.... It would be entirely untrue to say that the Cripps Mission had succeeded in making the Indian leaders change their hearts as far as the country's attitude towards the war was concerned. This was hinted even in the House of Commons debate yesterday. But I want to

make it very plain that it would be absolutely incorrect to say that even though the Cripps Mission had not been successful in what it had set out to do, it had succeeded in changing our attitude to the fundamental issues namely that only a Free India can defend herself. (cheers)

... 'The weapon of non-violence is with us and we will use it if faced with any aggressor. We would have taken up armed defence, but that has been deemed dangerous. The weapon of non-violence has been with us for the last 22 years and no one can take it away from us.'

A member of the A.I.C.C. at this point asked: does this mean that you advocate non-violence not as a principle but because we have been denied armed defence?

Maulana Azad: 'No. This has been made clear by the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Wardha. We made it clear that we could take up armed defence only if our National demands were satisfied and we had a National Government.'

... Babu Rajendra Prasad moved that the All-India Congress Committee having considered the resolution of the Working Committee in regard to the proposals of the British Government brought by Sir Stafford Cripps and the correspondence between him and the Congress President, endorses and approves the decision of the Working Committee.

... Mr. Asaf Ali, seconding the resolution, dealt at some length with the interview between Sir Stafford Cripps and the Congress President and said that it appeared that the proposals were not sincerely meant and were intended merely to put up a façade before the world.

... The resolution, when put to vote was passed, with one member dissenting.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru then moved the Working Committee's resolutions, the publication of which had been banned under the Defence of India Rules.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai seconded the resolutions, which were unanimously passed.

The House adjourned till 6.30 tomorrow evening.

22. Confidential Draft of the War Resolution by Jawaharlal Nehru for the Working Committee, Allahabad, 1 May 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 276–85.

In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of noncooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognize the independence of India or to part with any real power.

India's participation in the War was a purely British act imposed upon the Indians without the consent of their representatives. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the War, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the War, she would have done so as a free people fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organized on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in

the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilized for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interest and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the recent experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or the United Nations.

While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to fascism and Nazism as to imperialism. The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion of any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation might be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take form of nonviolent noncooperation as the British government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent noncooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them.

The success of such a policy of noncooperation and nonviolent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme, and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

23. Final Resolution Passed by the AICC on 1 May 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 276–85.

In view of imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future. The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to great bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of noncooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognize the independence of India or to part with any real power. India's participation in the War was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with

the people of any country she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and fascism as to imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the War, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the War, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organized on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

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The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, the British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of nonviolent non-cooperation as the British Government has prevented the organization of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places wherein the British and the invading forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. The success of such a policy of noncooperation and nonviolent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.



24. Letter from Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhbhai Patel to Maulana Azad, Sevagram, 3 May 1942, Expressing the Feeling That They Should Resign from the Working Committee
CWSVP, Vol. 9, p. 113.

Maulana Saheb,

Salutations to you. We can here from Allahabad. Shankarrao Deo and Prafulla Ghosh were also there. We apprised Gandhiji as to what happened in Allahabad. Now from here we go to our places. The views expressed by us in Allahabad have not been changed and now we feel that the differences were fundamental and now those have affects [*sic*] in the work also, so it would be better that we go out of the Working Committee. So, you permit us to do so by talking about the same topics again and again will not only be beneficial [*sic*] but harmful also. So it is not necessary to discuss the matter any more. It is better that you have discussions with Gandhiji. If any programme is being envisaged and if it is found necessary to present it before the Working Committee then the meeting of the Working Committee might be called.... When we will not be there, if you think proper you may call new members of the Working Committee. We have made known to you what we thought proper.

Respectfully yours,
RAJENDRA PRASAD
VALLABHBHAI PATEL

25. M.K. Gandhi Endorses Decision of Vallabhbhai Patel and Others to Resign from the Working Committee, Sevagram, 9 May 1942
CWSVP, Vol. 9, pp. 114–15.

Maulana Saheb,

I had sent a short reply of your letter yesterday. I had talks with Prafulla Babu, Rajendrababu and Deo. I heard everything as to what happened in Allahabad. I think that Sardar and others should be permitted to quit the Working Committee as it hampers our work. In such an atmosphere it is not good that somebody should try to accommodate himself with others. It is alright if as far as possible we walk together but when there are wide differences, then it becomes the duty of friends to part company in a cordial manner. Sardar and others also agree to that.

I had presented this view before you previously also. Now it is finally decided that in my opinion you ask Sardar and five or six other members to resign and constitute a new committee. Now when it is clear that when there are two opinions in the Committee, why should we pretend that we all are of the same view?

There is lot of differences between the resolution that is passed and the draft sent by me. What I wanted to show to the world by that resolution has not been incorporated in it. Sardar was saying that all of you concurred with my decision.

Now in order to clear everything, there is no necessity to call Working Committee. In my opinion let both of us meet. If Jawaharlalji is able to come it will be better still. Then if it is though proper meeting of Working Committee may be convened.

Yours
M.K. Gandhi

26. C. Rajagopalachari's Next Move, Official and Muslim League's Reactions to the Allahabad Resolutions

The Times of India, 4 May 1942.

New Delhi, May 3

The arrival here today of Mr. Rajagopalachari has created interest in political quarters as to whether he will develop plans for political action in Madras in accordance with his convictions and whether he will meet Mr. Jinnah before the latter leaves for Bombay in three days.

Both official and Muslim League quarters regret the developments in Allahabad though for different reasons.

Official quarters read in the Allahabad resolutions the meaning that the Congress has once again reverted to the policy of pacifism and that therefore, the chances for a political settlement to increase the tempo of India's war effort have receded to the background. While the realistic attitude of Mr. Rajagopalachari is appreciated in Delhi it is felt that if the Congress Party's support is not forthcoming in a large measure there may be little advantage in reviving popular Government in Madras.

Muslim Contention

Muslim League quarters contend that the speeches of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Nehru at Allahabad show that the Congress has not altered its attitude towards the Muslim League and, therefore, the basis for negotiation between the two parties is wanting. Thus Maulana Azad's willingness to nominate five Congress representatives to negotiate with five League representatives will not, I understand, be answered by the League. Muslim League quarters point out that the question of an interim national Government was not discussed with their spokesman by Sir Stafford Cripps, and it is stated that the League is not opposed to the formation of a composite cabinet but has been opposed uncompromisingly to the national Government of the Congress conception.

While League quarters express regret that the advice of such a sincere patriot as Mr. Rajagopalachari, who had worked zealously for the Congress for quarter of a century has been disregarded and even his motives have been questioned these quarters feel that no settlement is possible with individual Congressmen and that if Mr. Rajagopalachari has lost his cast [case?] with top Congress leadership and is not able to speak for the Congress there is little advantage in the League attempting a solution with Mr. Rajagopalachari.

Independent observers think that the political situation has got further muddled and that only an initiative from outside can revive hopes for a settlement.

27. The *Janmabhumi*, 4 May 1942, on the Rajagopalachari Resolution on Pakistan

Home Department Special Branch File No. 1018-I, MSA.

Referring to the rejection by the A.I.C.C. of Mr. Rajagopalachari's resolution in regard to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan the *Janmabhumi* writes: The fate of Mr. Rajaji's resolution shows that nationalist India has the greatest aversion to the unholy scheme of Pakistan sponsored by the Muslim League of Mr. Jinnah and that it is not prepared at any time to accept the scheme

of vivisection of India whatever may happen. Excepting the communalists having perverted mentality who are the originators of the bugbear of Pakistan and are engaged in reciting the name of Pakistan, all the Indians are determined to keep India one and indivisible. The Congress is eager to establish the relations of cooperation and friendship with the Muslim League. But it is not prepared to offer suicidal price by the accepting of Pakistan, just as no one will be prepared to thrust a dagger in his own heart for the sake of entering into friendship with some other person. Hence, there is not the least doubt that the path of Rajaji is wrong and dangerous. Different parties differ in their opinion as to whether the Muslim League represents a majority of the Muslims. It is not necessary to prove that it is not the only representative of the Muslims of India. But it is difficult to decide whether it represents a majority of the Muslims. Hence, if the attempts of the Congress to arrive at a settlement with the Muslim League and bring it to the path of understanding fail, then there remains only one course left open to it and that is to break the strength of such communalist political body having perverse, harmful, reactionary ideals. The Congress should make active, effective, organized and strong efforts to win over to its side Muslims in as large a number as possible.

28. B.G. Kher on the Madras Proposals

The Bombay Chronicle, 4 May 1942.

‘There are certain principles on which there can be no compromise. The proposal to vivisect India is one of these. The A.I.C.C. has given a splendid lead to the country’, declared Mr. B.B. Kher, ex-Premier of Bombay on his return from Allahabad on Sunday.

‘Deeply as I deplore Rajaji’s resignation, I am glad Allahabad did not become another Lucknow’ said Mr. B.G. Kher, ex-Premier of Bombay, in an interview to the ‘United Press’ on Mr. Rajagopalachari’s resolution rejected by the A.I.C.C.

Continuing he said: ‘It is now generally said that the pact which was made at Lucknow at the instance of the late Lokmanya had contributed not a little to the Muslim demand for separation. Rajaji was going to make the same mistake at Allahabad. But the A.I.C.C. refused to agree.

The Madras Proposals

‘I am opposed to the Madras proposals firstly because they are contrary to fundamental principles of independence, democracy and national unity on which we have repeatedly declared that Indian freedom must be based. Office without real power will bring only humiliation and not ability to relieve the distress of the people which Rajaji seeks.

‘By conceding the Muslim League the right to claim separation, should the same be persisted in, the Madras proposals have given an invitation to the minority to destroy all chances of national unity. The proposals admit Mr. Jinnah’s claim that the Congress is merely an organisation of Hindus and the Muslim League is the sole representative of the views of Indian Mussalmans.

National Government

‘It is futile to hope for any National Government by the willing consent or favour of the British Government after the fate of the Cripps negotiations. If he wanted a National Government

Rajaji should have invited for consultation not the Muslim League as he sought to do, but also the Hindu Mahasabha, Sikhs, Depressed Classes, Christians and Parsis. But his whole approach to the problem is wrong.'

'There are certain principles on which there can be no compromise. The proposal to vivisect India is one of these. The A.I.C.C. has given a splendid lead to the country', concluded Mr. Kher.

29. Rajendra Prasad to Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha, 6 May 1942,
from Wardha, on the Proceedings at Allahabad

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, p. 218.

Dear Anugrah Babu,

I came here from Allahabad as instructed by Gandhiji. He sent a resolution to the Working Committee which created a hot discussion for three days. I made it a bit easier but still it was not approved by most of the members.

At last Jawaharlal made a draft resolution which was passed unanimously but it does not include most of the points which Gandhiji wanted. He wanted me here to discuss all these points. Gandhiji is of opinion that if the British go away we will have to devise some means. So we should tell the British Government frankly to go away and to withdraw their army from India. This cannot be done and our desire can't be satisfied so long as the public opinion is not raised with one voice. We must be ready to face the worst which may arise out of it and that will bring out a new life to the country. If nobody is willing to approach the Government Gandhiji alone will approach the Government and tell them our last desire.

30. Governmental Reaction to the Final War Resolution of the AICC
Allahabad Session: L.S. Amery to Lord Linlithgow, 6 May 1942

TOP, Vol. 2, p. 42.

3. I hope the final resolution of Congress at Allahabad, telling us to clear out bag and baggage, will have opened the eyes of most people here and in America. Even the Manchester Guardian today in its leader washes its hands of them. I wonder what hope there is of Rajagopalachari getting together enough Congressmen and others to form a coalition government in Madras. It would be a great beginning of a break-up in Congress if he could do so. To my mind certainly the only hope of progress in India lies in a revolt against Congress and I expect, Rajagopalachari apart, it must come mainly from younger men.

31. Questions in the House of Commons: L.S. Amery's Defence of the
Ban on the Congress Resolutions

The National Herald, 8 May 1942.

London, May 7

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery was questioned in the Commons today regarding the censorship in India of the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee. Mr. Amery replying said: 'These questions have regard to the Government of India's action in respect of

three resolutions adopted by the A-I CWC on April 28. These resolutions which were reached on gross misrepresentation of fact or on unverified rumour criticized in unbridled terms the recent actions of the military and civil authorities in India and Burma. They were calculated—and to judge by their language, were, I think deliberately calculated—to undermine public confidence in the Government and the armed forces. The Government of India would in the present circumstances have been justified on these grounds in suppressing publication of all the three resolutions but they confine their prohibition to one resolution and part of the second. This in itself is sufficient to disprove the suggestion that the censorship is exercised in the rigid and indiscriminatory manner which the questions imply.’

32. Acharya Narendra Dev’s Views on CWC War Resolution

SWAND, Vol. 2, pp. 24–5.

I do not agree with the view that the war is one and indivisible. The aims of Russia and China are not identical with those of Britain and America. If it is one we should join the war and side with Britain. Our position has not been that we want power because without it we cannot kindle the national spirit. Our position has been that if the war was a people’s war and there was proof of it in action we are willing to throw in our weight on the side of democracies.

It is necessary to counteract the mischievous propaganda of Cripps. Cripps has been saying that internal differences have prevented a settlement. Rajaji has strengthened his hands. Japanese threat has also influenced our attitude to Britain. It has led us to even modify Poona.¹ We have to make it clear that Japanese threat has not unnerved us. We can tell the British to go, leaving us to our fate. Whatever unreality there is in Indian politics is due to the British rule. Let it go and the unreality will disappear. I am not interested in defeating Hitlerite Germany. I am more interested in war aims and peace aims.

¹ The Poona offer made by the Congress in July 1940.

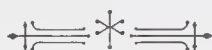
33. Jawaharlal Nehru on Mian Iftikharuddin’s¹ Support to C. Rajagopalachari’s Resolution on Pakistan: Interview at Amritsar Railway Station, 10 May 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 299–300.

Q. What are your views in regard to Mian Iftikharuddin’s views about Pakistan? Can he advocate his views as President of the provincial Congress committee?

JN: Everyone has freedom to express his views in any manner he likes, but if anyone propagates such views, he is not correct. The provincial Congress is competent to take notice of such views if such views have been expressed in his capacity as President of the Congress.

¹ Iftikharuddin was the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee at this time. He was also ideologically closer to the Communists.



34. Congress Activity in Bihar: Fortnightly Report for Bihar for the First Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Two well-attended political conferences have been held, one at Ranka in Palamau and one at Kudra in the Shahabad district. At the former Babu Jadubans Sahay and other local leaders condemned the highhandedness towards their tenants of the Chainpur and Ranka Rajas and the ruler of the Surguja State which adjoins, and they forecast the speedy end of the British rule in India. At Kudra the chief speakers were Messrs. Krishna Ballabh Sahay and Srikrishna Sinha who spoke on the organization of village defence parties and the enlistment of Congress members; at Patna City, at a meeting held on the 30th April to organize 'Raksha Dal', Mr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha criticized Government A.R.P. arrangements, the National War Front, the Cripps proposals and British expenditure on the war, the major part of which, according to him was being contributed by India, though the war was being fought for the good of Britain.

35. M.K. Gandhi's Article in the *Harijan*, 10 May, in Reply to a 'Pathetic English Letter'

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 86-7.

To those of us who love India and Indians and have tried to serve her people faithfully, the fact that in our hour of distress the hatred against us is growing is a matter of infinite sorrow. I admit we have not played and are still not playing fair by India; but can two wrongs make a right? When even the 'enemy' is in dire distress should he not be given some quarter? In asking us to withdraw are you not inviting your own people to bend the knee to Japan, knowing full well that you have not the non-violent strength as a country to resist any foreign aggression or domination? If you had had it, we could never have kept our hold on you. Will you not forgive past sins and rely on the goodwill of the new generation of Englishmen and women who can no longer think in terms of empire? Barring you, among the Congress leaders, is there anyone who believes whole-heartedly in non-violence? Yours is the only logical position, and you alone are a real friend of Britain.

This is an epitome of a pathetic English letter. I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter to Lord Linlithgow recording my impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of war. I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of. I remain same friend of British today that I was at beginning of war. I do not deny existence of hatred of British among general public nor its increase with march of events, but I claim that my national prescription has kept it under subjection and even sterilized it. I am convinced that time has come during the war not after it for British and Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. Estrangement between them is growing. Every act of British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety. There is no such thing as joint common interest. I feel British cannot suddenly change their traditional nature; racial superiority is treated not as vice but as virtue not only in India but in Africa, Burma and Ceylon. This drastic disease requires drastic remedy—complete and immediate orderly withdrawal from India at least, in reality and properly from all Non-European possessions. It will be bravest and cleanest act of British people. Clean end of Imperialism is likely to be

end of Fascism and Nazism; suggested action will certainly blunt edge of Fascism and Nazism which are offshoots of Imperialism. I feel I must devote whole of my energy to realisation of this supreme act. Presence of British in India is invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with invasion. Unadulterated non-co-operation will then have full sway.

36. M.K. Gandhi's Values Will Ultimately Prevail

Free Press Journal, 12 May 1942.

What is India's innermost attitude towards Britain, her people and her rule in India?

This question is engaging the attention of a large number of Englishmen who are earnest in their outlook towards Life's values.

The *Harijan*, edited by Gandhiji, is serving a useful purpose, in ventilating both Indian and British view-points on the vital issue.

Gandhiji recently tendered his counsel to the British Rulers, that it is their duty to withdraw from India, in this crisis, that a Free India may deal with the problems of Japanese menace as best as she can.

This counsel has been challenged by an earnest Englishman in an appeal to Gandhiji.

Gandhiji is uncompromising in his reply to the Englishman....

He says that the British must withdraw from India, as the only method of undoing the wrong that Britain has done to India, by her Imperialist policy.

Gandhiji's proposition is a logical statement of his philosophy of life.

It is on a par with the proposition that Gandhiji enunciated, the other day, counseling the British people to confine their resistance to Hitler to non-violent co-operation and as a preliminary, to lay down arms.

Gandhiji's earnestness is beyond cavil.

Gandhiji's position is unique; he is a world figure; he speaks, not as an Indian, but as a world teacher.

The values, for which Gandhiji stands, must ultimately prevail.

It is only a restatement of Lincoln's aphorisms.

Misgovernment, Lincoln declared, is preferable under Self-Government to Good Government, under alien rule.

No nation, Lincoln has affirmed, is good enough to rule over another nation.

Who can deny that the world will not be suffering its present travail, if the truths, to which Lincoln testified, had been respected?

The issue of Britain's relations with India, however, has to be determined, within the limits of the conditions, as they prevail today.

What is really the truth?

Is it the truth that India hates Britain and the hatred is growing, with every day, that passes?

We respectfully demur, to that proposition.

Was Indian hatred of Britain so universal, British Rule in India cannot stand today, in the present day conditions.

It has, however, to be acknowledged, that Gandhiji has made the largest contribution to the elimination of India's hatred of Britain.

Gandhiji taught India to hate wrong deeds, but not wrong-doers; that teaching has not been without avail.

India has, today, a large volume of critical opinion of Britain, but the hatred is not there.

There is, however, today, a growing sense of disgust at Britain's enormous stupidity, in not realizing the fundamental unity of the interests of India and Britain, in this grave hour of peril.

There is undoubtedly, a grievous sense of hurt, that Britain does not trust Indian nationals, even though, it is clearly in the self-interest of India, to help Britain to win the war.

There is, also, a growing sense of anger, that by Britain's stupidity, in not rallying India to her full capacity, she may increase the chances of enemy's success, on the Indian Front.

With all that, the outstanding thought is: stupid as Britain is, selfish as Britain is, may Britain win the war and may Britain hold the enemy off India's shores.

Let us help Britain, to the extent, that she permits us.

This reaction is due to a realization, that, when all is said and done, there are more values in common between India and Britain, than India and any other country in the world.

To illustrate, India distrusts America more than Britain.

There is one thing, however, in British character, which India is fast hating wholeheartedly.

It is the British self-complacency, that Britain will muddle through to victory, however, she may bungle.

This self-complacency, India firmly believes, led to the loss of Malaya and Burma.

India is afraid that this self-complacency may land India into a terrible hole.

Is India far wrong?

37. M.K. Gandhi's 'Moral Mysticism'

The Tribune, 18 May 1942.

While political India shares the view, expressed by Mahatma Gandhi at a press conference at Bombay on Saturday, that Mr. Amery's performance and the Cripps mission have been unexpectedly disappointing, as also the pain that he feels about the British Government's policy of withholding political power from India, the vast majority of his countrymen will, we have no doubt, find it difficult either to understand or agree with certain propositions that he has laid down. For the ordinary matter-of-fact observer of political events—and most men are matter-of-fact—Mahatma Gandhi's moral mysticism is bewildering. Indeed, his approach to politics is one of a mystic. On account of Britain's attitude towards India, which is 'morally wrong,' Mahatma Gandhi has withdrawn his moral support from Britain, this his 'sympathies are undoubtedly with Russia and China.'...

.... Britain, Russia, China and the United States are allies. How can any country support one without at the same time supporting the others? One can only sympathise with Russia and China by aiding them. Britain is aiding Russia and China. Logic demands that India, if she sympathises with Russia and China, must also aid Britain. Mahatma Gandhi's disappointment at the United States of America not remaining neutral leads to a third question. 'If America,' he says, 'had wished to do so, she could have brought about peace, but it is my firm opinion that America did not use that opportunity.' Is that really so? Mahatma Gandhi's statement is, in fact, astounding. For in the early stages of the war President Roosevelt did his best to keep out of the conflict, but he was driven into it by the force of circumstances. In view of the designs of the Axis Powers for world domination he could not have remained neutral without at the same time jeopardizing the political ideals of democracy, which the Axis Powers were out to destroy, and the national integrity of the United States itself. Even if President Roosevelt had taken a

short-sighted view and had left the European democracies to their fate, he would have had to resist ultimately, possibly single-handed, the onward march of Axis aggression. Peace with Hitler could be secured only on his terms. These are embodied in the servitude of mankind....

38. M.K. Gandhi's Latest

The Indian Nation, Patna, 20 May 1942.

Self-contradiction in Mahatma Gandhi's statements and speeches is not uncommon and on many occasions he has himself admitted his 'Himalayan blunders'. There is nothing reprehensible about it and as a matter of fact a certain amount of flexibility is not only desirable but admissible among politicians as absolute rigidity may often lead to disaster.... But in the Mahatma's latest statement made to pressmen at Bombay on May 16 we find him saying: 'I am very sorry to have to confess today that my mind refuses to give moral support to Great Britain because the British behaviour towards India has filled me with great pain.' This is rather perplexing....

.... Nobody denies that British behaviour towards India has not been just and it is unfortunate that in a crisis like this Britain should be so cussed as not to be able to recognize the valor and importance of conciliating India politically in order to make her a willing and faithful ally militarily.... But what has the British Government done in the last few days or weeks which they have not done before to merit the withdrawal of Mahatma's moral support? There have been no new developments in this connection; leaving aside the Cripps episode only a continuation of Britain's old policy towards India.... When the offer of August 1940 was made and the British Government refused to transfer power to popular representatives, the Mahatma extended his moral support to the Allies. And now when the question is not merely the fortunes and fate of Great Britain in the war but the imminent invasion of India and large-scale enemy air raids, the Mahatma comes out with an emphatic assertion that he has withdrawn the moral support which he so long extended to Britain, which in plain words means complete non-cooperation with Allied nations efforts for winning the war.

The Mahatma may have his own reasons for extending or withdrawing the moral support the significance of which may be too subtle for ordinary mortals to understand. But we are passing through an abnormal period when such subtleties may actually cause great havoc. Whatever the Mahatma himself may anticipate, the net results to f his latest declaration will be to make the task difficult for those who are organizing resistance to possible Japanese aggression in India....

39. Maulana Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru, Calcutta, 13 May 1942, about the Suddenness of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai's Arrest

Correspondence with Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 5, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlal,

.... I have received a letter from Kidwai, and Paliwal has also wired to me his readiness in connection of the evacuation of Children. I am settling the details with the Bengal Government. As soon as they reach a definite point, I shall inform the U.P. friends.

But I came to know to-day that Kidwai has yesterday been arrested suddenly, under the Defence of India Act. I am at a loss to understand what has he done within the last few days that he has become a dangerous man now for the U.P. Government.

I had written to you in my last letter that I was leaving for Bombay. But the affairs of Bengal have stuck in such a way, that I had to postpone my visit. The Chittagong air attack has created a feeling here, that Calcutta will also be attacked within a few days. Moreover, new and difficult problems have suddenly arisen in connection with the coastal populations of Bengal. Under the circumstances I could not prepare myself to go out.

It pains me to find that Iftikhar is going out of the way. I do not know whether you tried to bring him round and with what result.

The longer you stay at Kulu, the happier shall I be. I was much concerned to find you depressed in Allahabad. Now you should admit that you are going towards the wrong side of fifty, and you should be a little more careful about your health.

Yours sincerely,

A.K. Azad

40. Maulana Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru, 22 May 1942, Asking Him to Spare Some Time for Madras

Correspondence with Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 5, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlal,

I want to meet Bapu alone first, and then we may meet him together. I shall leave for Wardha as soon as the urgent Bengal affairs allow me to do so. In the meanwhile, I request you to spare some time for Madras, if there be no other pressing engagement. You had told me in Allahabad that you would do so. It is necessary from every point of view. I would be thankful to you, if you could leave for Madras after staying in Allahabad for a few days. Then on your journey from Madras you can break journey at Wardha.

Yours sincerely,

A.K. Azad

41. Vallabhbhai Patel to J.B. Kripalani, 26 May 1942, Expressing Desire to Be 'Released' from the CWC

CWSVP, Vol. 9, p. 118.

I owe you an apology for not writing to you since our meeting at Wardha when you were not present.

Rajendra Babu and others had gone there direct and I had gone to Bombay so I was one day later. Bapu had heard all from them before I reached there. So after our discussion he wrote to Maulana that in his opinion no meeting was necessary and that he should come and see him after discussing the whole thing with him he may call a meeting if necessary. Maulana had written to Bapu that he would come to Wardha very soon. He had written this to him from Allahabad. Bapu also wrote to him that we should all be released from the Working Committee. We (Rajendra and myself) wrote to him that we should all be released and that we saw no necessity of the meeting of the Working Committee. These letters were sent to him with Prafulla Babu.

In the meanwhile Rajaji is spreading poison as freely and rapidly as he can. It is no use entering into controversy with him. He won't listen and he has the support of the entire Anglo-Indian Press, and the Muslim Press over and above so-called National support. The news agency supports him fully.

He has done enough mischief and we will have to reap the fruits of his folly for a long time.

42. Jawaharlal Nehru to Maulana Azad, Lucknow, 30 May 1942, about
His Meeting with M.K. Gandhi
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 354–5.

My dear Maulana,

... I spent just one day with Gandhiji. I am glad I went because I got to know a little of what he was thinking. During my stay at Kulu I was almost cut off from newspapers and outside news. On coming back I was confronted by many new developments and I found myself rather at sea. The visit to Gandhiji and now the meeting of our Provincial Congress committee, have helped me to understand the present situation. I told Gandhiji that I had come to listen to him and not to talk much, as I wanted to have time to think over what he said.

I understand that the scheme for making provision for evacuee children from Calcutta has fallen through or at any rate has made no progress. So we are not taking any further steps in the matter.

Yours,

Jawaharlal Nehru

43. Maulana Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru, 31 May 1942, from Calcutta,
Stating That His Mind Is Disturbed over Certain Matters
Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 5, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlal,

Your letter of 27th May from Wardha had reached me day before yesterday. I am sending this letter to Allahabad, so that you may get it as soon as you reach there.

When you were staying in Calcutta en route to Assam, you might remember that one day I had had a sudden attack of giddiness while talking to you. At Allahabad too, this complaint had happened once, but I did not take any notice of it. Recently it has recurred many a time, specially when I work long. The remedy seems to be, that I should give up the work for a few days and take rest; but you know the circumstances cannot permit me to do so. Even if I am allowed to do so, how would it be possible to take rest after leaving work?

I am much disturbed over certain matters. I do not know what are your feelings now. My mind seems to be much oppressed, which burden I cannot remove in any way.

You write that you will be ready after the 3rd June, but owing to my present state of health, I think I shall not be able to leave on the 4th. I might be delayed for a few days. However, it is certain that we have to go to Wardha next week. If my complaint does not increase I may probably be able to leave on the 5th or 6th instant. In any case I shall let you know by telegram beforehand, so that you may also be able to leave Allahabad the same day.

The Medical Mission is working in Silchar satisfactorily. The local responsible men are praising its work. A number of refugees is coming to Goalundo. A Unit has, therefore, been sent there also. Kiran Sankar Roy is going there for its opening ceremony.

The refugees from Burma are also pouring in Sylhet and Karimganj. Most of them succumb to epidemic diseases. The local Congress Committee has made arrangements for doctors. They were in need of medicines, clothes and male-nurses, which we have supplied them.

Owing to the air raid by Japan on the borders of Assam, a new situation has arisen in the whole province. People leave the cities for villages; where owing to rains a great danger of seasonal diseases is imminent. Moreover, the Marwari grain dealers have totally vacated the province, which has caused great dislocation of grain business. There is no purchaser of the Assam paddy, and no one is there to supply them with other kinds of grains which are needed by Assam. The military is purchasing away all the local stock of medicines, and there is a great dearth of necessary medicines.

These conditions required our utmost vigilance to relieve the distress of Assam. I have done whatever I possibly could immediately, and I hope I shall be able to help them sufficiently from Calcutta.

Yours sincerely,

A.K. Azad

44. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to Jawaharlal Nehru, 22 May 1942, Hoping That He Will Come Round to Bapu's Way of Thinking

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 2, NMML.

My dear J.N.,

Thank you for both your wires. I had thought of going to Delhi on the 24th to see you—leaving here on the 23rd evening, that is—and returning the same evening. But I have an engagement here on the 23rd morning which I cannot put off and your dates have changed. I am sorry. I really wanted to talk over Bapu's mind—as I had sensed it evolving—with you. But since I wrote he has written, more and more clearly in *Harijan*. I also had a chat with Nandan and told him to pass on everything to you. I could not understand your position. I felt that logically you should—if you wanted to help the war effort—be with C.R. and it grieved me. Your last statement has put heart into me again and I feel you will come round to B's [Bapu's] way of action in the end and all will be well. We may not have divisions in Congress at this juncture—it is too critical. We must not lose Congress support either and we must not be precipitate in any action. In case of invasion our duty i.e. non violent non-cooperation is clear. Anything is better, however, than cowardice and I loathe the idea, which is gaining ground I fear, of welcoming the Japs just in order to turn these people out. That is mean and cowardly. I also hate the hatred for the British which one senses everywhere and yet there is a feeling of helplessness in us too which is disheartening. Therefore we must be capable of saying we can win through ourselves somehow or other. These people's bonafides literally do not exist as far as we are concerned and their incompetence is sickening. Then why rely on them in any way? Their so called help of us is purely self-help. I think the next four months are critical. Personally I do not—like you—want Nazism or Fascism to triumph over the so called democracies even though they are so-called. But we cannot be trampled underfoot by them either. Could you not

come up for a day? I know you loathe Simla and I dare not hope for the privilege. Anyhow let me know when you are next in Delhi.... I trust you left Indu well and are rested yourself too.

Much love
Yours

A.

45. M.K. Gandhi: A Phenomenon

The National Call, 23 May 1942.

Despite the fact that the Mahatma is not a member of the Congress or of the Working Committee, he is the accredited leader of the teeming millions of India. He is a political giant, made taller by the lofty idealism, in comparison with whom other leaders and politicians must still seem like mere pigmies. Let there be no mistake. Through him speaks the voice of India. His words find a receptive echo from millions of unlettered but patriotic hearts.

Today, according to Mahatmaji, even men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri Rajagopalachariar are playing the role of apostates. The working Committee has divided counsels. This may create the impression, either that the Mahatma has lost his erstwhile political hold or that he has lost touch with the people. Both impressions would be wrong. It would be more correct, on the other hand, to say that the Working Committee has lost touch with the masses, and does not sway them to implicit obedience, as it did in the past.

We ourselves have differed widely from Mahatma Gandhi on the war issue. We have never hesitated to say so. Ours, as of men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajaji, and some others, has been in the nature of an intellectual revolt against ineffective pacifism at a time when more realistic and more aggressive remedies are urgently called for. But even we, with others, have to admit that the voice of Gandhi still rules the hearts and souls of men, in this as in other matters.

It is in this background that one must study a phenomenon that has been taking shape. When hostilities broke out between Germany and Britain, in his first interview with the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi shed tears at the prospect of air attacks on Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. His deepest sympathies were with Britain. Two years and a half have passed. Not only bombs have fallen on Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, but the whole of London is in ruins, and there are several towns in England that have been reduced to rubble and debris. Britain has gained more allies and friends. It is now fighting side by side with America, China and Russia. If anything one should have expected greater moral sympathy from Mahatma Gandhi for Britain. On the contrary, he has felt compelled to announce that events have forced him to withdraw whatever sympathy he had for Britain at the commencement of the war.

Unfortunately fullest importance has not been attached, in England, India or the Allied countries to this statement of Mahatma Gandhi, nor to the other one in which he has invited Britain for its own general redemption to withdraw from India. Behind these perfectly non-violent statements, one can see a terrible amount of bitterness against the manner in which Britain has dealt with India's demand for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi may be a pacifist, but at one time he acted as a stretcher-bearer on behalf of Britain. In the last war he recruited soldiers for the army. But in this war he is even grieved at being compelled to contribute two pice for every envelope posted by him, to the war fund.

That this change should have come over him when the enemy is striking at our door, makes the position still more unfortunate. It cannot be said that the Mahatma is oblivious of the danger to India from Japan. He realizes that danger and all that it implies, as well as any one in this country. He also realizes what the effect of his words is going to be on the minds of the millions who have implicit and unshaken faith in his leadership. It has become a fashion with some to call him a crank and thus to ignore him. But he is not more a crank, than is Mr. Churchill or Hitler or Stalin. In relation to India he has the same position as any of these great statesmen, with this difference that he commands besides political loyalty of his people, also, their spiritual devotion.

We have emphasized these facts to impress on those in authority in India, and those in Britain, the need to give full weight to the words that have for some weeks emanated from Mahatma Gandhi and not to ignore the potentialities implicit in them. Any talk of war fronts must seem unreal and ineffective, with Mahatma Gandhi not only out of such a front, but in such a mood. It is imperative that Britain should take steps with his moral support, even though it may not be possible to secure his co-operation as in the last war. Mahatma Gandhi speaks the voice of India. That voice should not be out of accord with active defence of the country. We therefore appeal to Lord Linlithgow to meet the Mahatma, either to convince him that Britain is still the same Britain for whom he shed tears two and a half years ago, or to take steps that will satisfy the Mahatma of the 'bona fides' of his country.

46. Reactions of Bombay Press to M.K. Gandhi's Statements: From Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942 GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The statements made by Mr. Gandhi in his recent interview with the local Press representatives in Bombay and his article in the *Harijan* of May 17th appealing to the British to withdraw from India caused a considerable stir in the Press. Most of the papers disagreed with Mr. Gandhi's opinion that America could have remained out of the war. They emphatically declared that war was forced on America and that Mr. Gandhi was mistaken in his views. The following are some extracts from articles on this matter:-

Bombay Sentinel—'Gandhiji's charge against America is not only unsupportable on any sort of ground. It is a grave and wanton slander which we hope that Mahamta will see fit to withdraw when he is in a more reasonable and tranquil frame of mind.'

Lokmanya and Janmabhumi—'With all reverence for Mr. Gandhi we think it necessary to state that this opinion of Mr. Gandhi is wrong. By expressing this opinion he has done injustice to America and President Roosevelt. It will land the Indian people into difficulties and endanger the future interests of the country. The reasons for which America has joined the war were quite sufficient for her. Those reasons made it obligatory on her to join the war for the good of the world. If she had not joined the war then it would have been a great ignoble failure on her part and a great calamity would have overtaken the world. To say that America joined the war in the intoxication of her immense wealth and power is to do injustice to her. It shows want of practical wisdom. It is fatal to our cause and an insult to human intelligence. It is not a fact that America joined the war of her own accord.'

Vividha Vritta—'Mr. Gandhi should (now) either go to the Himalayas or retire from politics and pass a peaceful life at Wardha. But he should not try to be an agent of Germany or Japan.'

Prabhat (Poona)—‘Mr. Gandhi’s criticism against America is so unfounded and unjust that his magnanimity of heart would be best expressed only by withdrawing it.’

Dhanurdhari—‘To deny moral support to Britain and America in this war would be suicidal.’

Rast-Rahbar—‘We may have our differences with Britain, she may have proved false to India, but should we allow another enemy to enter our house for that reason?’

The following are the comments of some Muslim papers:

Din inquired what difference there was between these writings of Gandhiji and the traitorous activities known as the Fifth Column activities.

Inquilab-e-Jadid deduced from the movements and utterances of Mr. Gandhi that ‘When the time comes he would make compromise with the enemy’.

Roznama-e-Khilafat expressed the view that Mr. Gandhi was wasting his time in talking such nonsense.

A few papers, however, fully endorsed the views expressed by Mr. Gandhi in his interview and asserted that by disregarding the sentiments expressed by him, Britain would be acting against her own interests. The Vishwamitra wrote: ‘The clear meaning of the Britishers going bag and baggage is only that they should give up their attitude of treating India as their possession and pressing it under their thumb.’ The Vande Mataram observed: ‘It is but natural that the heart of a great patriot like Mr. Gandhi should rise in revolt when British statesmen indulge in the game of befooling India’.

47. B. Shiva Rao to T.B. Sapru, 23 May 1942, about His Letter to M.K. Gandhi

Correspondence with T.B. Sapru, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML.

.... In the meanwhile, new complications are arising. The Mahatma seems to be convinced that the British do not mean to play fair and there are disturbing reports about his intentions in the immediate future. I took the liberty of writing to him on the 16th May, pointing out the grave danger of embarking on non-violent non-cooperation against the Japanese. I told him that a great many would join him not because they believe in pacifism but moved by anti-British sentiments. In fact, I said it would be non-cooperation not of the brave but of the coward or the opportunist. I asked him frankly whether he should not turn his attention to seeking a settlement with Mr. Jinnah on the basis of the resolution of the Muslim League working committee passed at Nagpur postponing all major issues until after the war, and assuring the Muslims of a real share of power in the centre and in the provinces within the framework of the existing constitution. I added that after a discussion with Liaquat I was authorized to say that Mr. Jinnah was still of the same opinion; but that if the Congress were to agree to the principle of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah would be prepared to associate himself with a demand for a change in the Central Government going even outside the existing constitution.

I have just had a letter from Mahatma to say that he would go even barefoot to Mr. Jinnah if my interpretation of his attitude were correct. He wants to know definitely whether it is so from M. Jinnah himself. I had, in fact, made an effort to get confirmation from Jinnah himself last week, but he is too big a man to see ordinary newspaper correspondents like myself....



48. Extract from T.B. Sapru's Letter to B. Shiva Rao, 28 May 1942,
about M.K. Gandhi Contemplating a Mass Movement
GOI Home Political File No. 220/42, NAI.

.... As regards the situation of the Congress I too have been hearing that the Mahatma contemplates starting a mass movement. All sorts of versions are going round. One of them is that he is going to ask publicly the British to clear out. I cannot conceive of anything more foolish or more short-sighted than this. Personally I think the time has come when the Mahatma should in decency recognise that he should retire from politics. I am strongly of the opinion that so long as the present Indian leadership—Hindu and Muslim—continues to exist and so long as political power continued to be concentrated in those British hands in which it is at present, there is no chance for a settlement in India or for the improvement of the situation generally. It is all very sad but we must not deceive ourselves.

As regards Jinnah you may see Liaquat Ali Khan or anybody else a hundred times but take it from me you cannot get Jinnah to make publicly a statement of the sort you want him to make or to stretch his hand of fellowship to the Congress or to the Hindus in token of settlement. Why should he? The continuance of the present situation helps him in his plans.

I have been reading all that appears in the press about Rajaji. As I have told you more than once I admire the man for his sincerity and his courage, but I do not agree with the line that he has taken. While some other Muslim leaders have been patronizing him and expressing their approval of Rajaji, Jinnah has been holding his silence like a sphinx....

49. About M.K. Gandhi Planning a Mass Movement Soon: Book-post Cover Dated 25 May 1942 (Postmark Allahabad, Kutchery, 25 May 1942), Intercepted Correspondence from P.D. Tandon, Allahabad, to the Editor, *The National Herald*, Lucknow
GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

'Sent the telegram to the Office this morning. Sending this copy for use in case the telegram is not delivered there.

'Those who recently met Gandhi state that he greatly disgusted with policy pursued by Government in India stop Gandhi planning launch mass movement soon stop What shape or when it will begin not possible state just now stop But movement is coming soon stop Gandhi will reveal his plans to Nehru and Azad first and discuss with them stop Learnt Maulana will soon go Wardha see Gandhi stop After Maulana Gandhi meeting Working Committee will be called and place Gandhi's plan for movement stop Gandhi's mind mostly occupied these days finding ways how vindicate nation's honour at time great humiliation of Indians stop Thus told me a responsible Congress leader.'

50. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to *The Hindu*, 28 May 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 162–4.

Answering the question of a Press correspondent whether his present policy as revealed by his writings did not vitiate his own declaration that he was a friend of China, Gandhiji said:

My answer is an emphatic 'no'. I remain the passionate friend of China that I have always claimed to be. I know what loss of freedom means. Therefore, I could not but be in sympathy with China which is my next-door neighbour in distress. And, if I believed in violence and if I could influence India, I would put in motion every force at my command on behalf of China to save her liberty. In making, therefore, the suggestion which I have made about withdrawal of British power, I have not lost sight of China. But because I have China in mind, I feel that the only effective way for India to help China is to persuade Great Britain to free India and let a free India make her full contribution to the war effort. Instead of being sullen and discontented, India free will be a mighty force for the good of mankind in general...

Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that he heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that I have turned pro-Japanese. I could only laugh at the suggestion, for, if I am sincere in my passion for freedom, I could not consciously or unconsciously take a step which will involve India in the position of merely changing masters. If, in spite of my resistance to the Japanese menace with my whole soul the mishap occurs, of which I have never denied the possibility, then the blame would rest wholly on British shoulders. I have no shadow of doubt about it. I have made no suggestion which, even from the military standpoint, is fraught with the slightest danger to British power or to Chinese. It is obvious that India is not allowed to pull her weight in favour of China. If British power is withdrawn from India in an orderly manner, Britain will be relieved of the burden of keeping the peace in India and at the same time gain in a free India an ally not in the cause of Empire—because she would have renounced in toto all her imperial designs, but in a defence, not pretended but wholly real, of human freedom. That I assert and that only is the burden of my recent writings and I shall continue to do so so long as I am allowed by the British power.

Q. Now what about your plan—you are reported to have matured plans for launching some big offensive?

Well, I have never believed in secrecy nor do I do so now. There are certainly many plans floating in my brain. But just now I merely allow them to float in my brain. My first task is to educate the public mind in India and world opinion, in so far as I am allowed to do so. And when I have finished that process to my satisfaction, I may have to do something. That something may be very big, if the Congress is with me, and the people are with me. But British authority will have a full knowledge of anything I may wish to do before I enforce it. Remember I have yet to see the Maulana Saheb. My talks with Pandit Nehru are yet unfinished. I may say that they were wholly of a friendly nature and we have come nearer to each other even with the unfinished talk of yesterday. Naturally I want to carry the whole of the Congress with me if I can, as I want to carry the whole of India with me. For my conception of freedom is no narrow conception. It is co-extensive with the freedom of man in all his majesty. I shall, therefore, take no step without the fullest deliberation.

51. M.K. Gandhi's Visit to Bombay: Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Indications received indicates that M. Gandhi's visit to Bombay had a dual purpose, to collect funds for C.F. Andrews' memorial and to meet Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and other leaders to gauge the chances of success of a mass civil disobedience movement in Gujarat and elsewhere. It is

reported that Mr. Gandhi, while in Bombay, confided secretly to the Bombay Suburban and Gujarat Congress leaders, who interviewed him on May 15th, his intention to start a mass civil disobedience movement in the near future. The form the movement should take has not yet been decided but it appears that a demand will first be made for the withdrawal of the British from India, followed by a no-tax campaign in case of non-compliance. It is stated that before launching the movement he will write articles in the *Harijan* designed to force Government to take action against it, in which case he will have a good excuse for starting the campaign on or for going on a hunger strike. It appears that Mr. Gandhi does not propose to appoint any dictator to succeed him but would leave the struggle to individual members of the congress who would have to develop non-violent action on their own initiative in his absence. It is also reported that Mr. Gandhi is drafting his scheme for placing it before the next meeting of the Congress Committee and, if appreciable support is forthcoming, it will be placed before the All India Congress Committee for final approval. There are indications that Congress may divide over it when it is announced. Mr. Gandhi is reported to have informed some of his friends that this time the fight will be to a finish.

52. AICC Appoints R.N.L. Nandrekar to Tour Bombay Province:
Fortnightly Report for Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

It is understood that the All India Congress Committee is to depute Mr. R.N.L. Nandrekar to tour this Province from June 25th to July 8th ostensibly to inspect the offices of the Karnatak, Maharashtra and Bombay Provincial Congress Committees but actually to discuss the working of the new programme with Congress workers.

53. Urgent Meeting of EC of Gujarat PCC: Fortnightly Report for
Bombay for the Second Half of May 1942
GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

It is reported in the Press that an urgent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee was convened at Bardoli on May 31st under the presidency of Mr. Vallabhbhai J. Patel to discuss Mr. Gandhi's future plans. It appears that at this meeting Mr. Patel gave a detailed account of the events following the Allahabad session of the All India Congress Committee and of his talks with Mr. Gandhi and exhorted the members present to follow Mr. Gandhi's advice steadfastly and to rise to the occasion when called upon to do their duty to the Congress and the country. On the evening previous to this meeting, Mr. Patel is reported to have delivered a speech at the Vedchi Ashram in the Surat district, the keynote of which was 'Keep Ready'.

54. J.B. Kripalani to M.K. Gandhi, 28 May 1942, Asking Him to Clarify
His Position
AICC Papers, F. No. G-2/1942, NMML.

My dear Bapu,

I would request you to answer the following question through the columns of the *Harijan*:

Is it a fact that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the allies are going to be defeated in this war?

It is necessary that you clear the position in this respect. A very important leader in the Congress thinks like that and he says that he is sure because he has this knowledge from his personal talks with you. He also holds that the Chinese leaders carried the same impression from his talks with you. I would have readily believed the leader were it not for the fact that I had myself heard you say more than a year back that you believed that this war will be a prolonged one and it will end in a draw after exhausting the two parties involved in it. You have also in your public statements referred to the doggedness of Englishmen. I therefore think that there is some misunderstanding and I think the position should be cleared and the public taken into confidence. If an important leader thinks that your present attitude is dictated by your belief in allies defeat I feel it would take away much from your present stand which as I understand it is based upon fundamental principles.

55. Jawaharlal Nehru's Visit to Punjab: From Fortnightly Report for the Punjab for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The only Congress activity of importance during the fortnight centred round the visit of Jawahar Lal Nehru to the Province. He addressed 2 public meetings at Lahore and Amritsar on May 21st and 23rd attended by 8,000 and 25,000 people, respectively. Analytically his speeches were inconclusive, full of inconsistencies and exposed his failure, as a national leader to give the people a lead, but the great majority of those who heard and read them were no analytical critics and the effects of the speeches on them must have been harmful and dangerous. Both were full of morbid pessimism, defeatism and racial hatred and were calculated to prejudice the war effort, the development of the civil defence services and to weaken public resistance to Japanese aggression. In his Lahore speech he made a slanderous attack on the Indian Army which he described as a collection of mercenaries lacking courage and enthusiasm. Only the Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection, could, he claimed, save India for 'British Imperialism' was doomed and Britain could no longer defend India. His speeches were deliberately calculated to slow mutual mistrust and to spread panic by stressing the military weakness of the British in India.

56. Congress Activities in CP and Berar: From Fortnightly Report for Central Provinces and Berar for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

The Nagpur Congress conferences [17 May] were held in camera. Cyclostyled copies of the two banned A.I.C.C. resolutions were distributed. These resolutions were read out and approved. On receipt of information that a further stock of copies of the resolutions was kept for public distribution, the Provincial Government directed the District Magistrate to take action under section 16 (2) of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931, and treat the copies as un-authorised news-sheets. Further enquiries, however, showed that no spare copies of the cyclostyled sheets were printed and no searches were therefore carried out. Mr. Shanker Rao Deo was active advising district congress workers, merchants and others, on the congress

programme. He addressed a public meeting on the 28th May at Nagpur and made a long and rambling anti-British and defeatist speech, which is being examined. He also addressed a meeting of congress workers the following day and said that it is the congress alone which can establish order in an emergency and advised Congress workers to preach self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

.... Speculation still continues in regard to Mahatma Gandhi's next move. One report states that a civil disobedience movement on a mass scale will begin about the middle of June. Students will be asked to give up colleges, lawyers will be asked to boycott courts, and Government servants will be asked to resign. If Mahatma Gandhi is arrested, he will begin to fast. Some people, however, believe that the treat of mass civil disobedience is pure bluff designed to divert attention from Mr. Rajagopalachariar's destructive schemes and to cut the ground from under his feet before his ideas percolate to the rank and file of the congress. A third school of thought, representing the anti-fascist group, expresses the view that the new move proposed by Mahatma Gandhi 'is intended to detract the Indian masses from the anti-fascist movement by playing upon their hatred against the British Government'. Latterly, the congress press has not been as vociferous in its references to the proposed mass action envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi in some of the articles in the Harijan.

.... Mr. Othman K.H. Woo of the Islamic National Salvation Federation of China, who arrived in Nagpur on the 14th, addressed an audience of about 1,000 on the 16th at a meeting presided over by Mr. M.Y. Shareef, ex-Congress Minister. Mr. Woo dwelt on the age-long friendship between India and china and said he was confident of ultimate victory because of the unity, man-power and resources of a vast country like China. The future of India depended upon the stand she makes against aggression alongside other democracies. Mr. Shareef explained the congress point of view in regard to the war and said that the Indian people were not consulted when war was declared, and even now they have not received any satisfactory assurances about the place their country would occupy after the war was over. Mr. Woo visited the Nagpur Nagar Congress Committee office on the 17th and said that Marshal Chiang Kai-Shek had little time to devote to the Indian problem, although he took a keen interest in Indian affairs. The important thing now, he urged, was to defeat Japan.

57. Congress Activities in Assam: From Fortnightly Report for Assam for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Activity is practically confined to the efforts of Messrs. G.N. Bardoloi and F.A. Ahmed, ex-Ministers, to encourage the growth of Santi Senas, and anti-Fascist meetings, at which demands for freedom to work for the cause are reiterated. At Silchar there has been a welcome readiness by Congressmen to co-operate with the official organizations.

58. Declining Popularity of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in NWFP: Fortnightly Report for NWFP for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

Considerable interest has been taken by educated Muslims in the activities of Rajagopalachariar since his declaration in favour of a Congress-Muslim League settlement. There seems no

doubt that these activities combined with the marriage of the daughter of Dr. Khan Sahib to Flight Lieutenant Jaswant Singh have contributed to a weakening of Congress discipline in the Province. That it is Abdul Ghaffar Khan rather than his brother, who is facing a rising tide of unpopularity, is clear from the exaggerated efforts made by the former to dissociate himself from his brother's decision, and to lay all the blame for the recent criticism directed against the family, on Government!

The activities of the Congress have been confined to seven public meetings, all of which were poorly attended. The usual defeatist speeches were made, coupled with demands for the arming of the public for self defence. Some members of the Muslim League have begun to spread propaganda against the Red Shirt movement.

59. Impact of NWFP Developments on Baluchistan: From Fortnightly Report for Baluchistan for the Second Half of May 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 18/5/42, NAI.

.... The Political Agent, Loralai reports tht the announcement of the marriage of Dr. Khan Sahib's daughter to a non-Muslim has shocked tribal opinion and greatly lowered the prestige of the Anjuman-i-Watan, who have hitherto represented themselves as closely affiliated to the Khudai-Khidmatgaran of the N.W.F.P.

60. Letter from S.K. Patil, General Secretary, Bombay PCC, to General Secretary, AICC, 3 June 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-7/1942, NMML.

Dear Friend,

We beg to communicate for your information the following resolution which has been unanimously passed by the B.P.C.C. at its meeting held on the 2nd June 1942 regarding the present political situation:

'The B.P.C.C. while generally supporting the Allahabad resolution of the A.I.C.C. on the political situation, calls upon Congressmen in the City to help people in the preparations of self-defence and be ready for sacrifices when the call for action comes from the Congress.'

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- S.K. Patil
General Secretary

61. 'Quit India' Campaign

Indian Nation, 4 June 1942.

Mahatma Gandhi's exhortation to the Britishers in India to quit the country voluntarily and peacefully has caused a stir amounting to a convulsion in the dovecotes of many. The proposals being a revolutionary it was but natural that it should lead to such consternation. But it is not only revolutionary in its complexion but dangerous in its implications; and the Mahatma's explanation of his views does not succeed in eliminating the apprehensions felt in this regard

by the layman. One of the consequences of an interrupted propagation of this idea is that it intensifies hatred of the British among the ignorant public, who cannot possibly appreciate the nice distinction between asking the British to quit the country and non-cooperating with the Japanese who are sure to take their place if the former immediately act on the Mahatma's advice in a fit of generous impulse. We are not of course sure that the Britisher is going to be moved by such an impulse in any case and so the Mahatma's prescription as an immediate wartime panacea may not possess any practical significance. But even otherwise if the effect of the withdrawal of the British is not to be internal commotion and disorder the process will have to be undertaken after due and adequate preparation. That preparation will undoubtedly be a prolonged process if, firstly the element of hatred is to be eliminated and secondly, if internal convulsion is to be avoided. At the same time one is entitled to ask whether the Mahatma is right in his premises that it is the Britisher's presence in India that invites the Japanese invasion and that the moment the former withdraw the latter will become India's friends and well-wishers.

That the Japanese cannot and will not be India's liberators or helpers is an elementary commonsense point of view; and prominent Congressmen like Dr. Rajendra Prasad have been systematically exposing the fallacy in that vain hope entertained by some. But supposing the British leave India can the Japanese be deflected from their passionate lust for territorial conquest and prevented from laying waste this country of ours after crossing over into it. British withdrawal from India and its inevitable sequel of India's freedom are what every patriotic Indian desires. But the manner in which the Mahatma seeks to bring that consummation about and the time he has chosen to raise the slogan 'Quit India' appear neither appropriate nor satisfactory. It will be interesting to watch Britishers' own reactions to this invitation to them from the Mahatma.

62. Asaf Ali to Jawaharlal Nehru, 4 June 1942, about Need for Closer Contacts with USA

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 4, NMML.

My dear Jawahar,

.... 2. Some of our Chinese friends came to see me yesterday. They had much to talk about. But they emphatically insisted on closer contacts with the U.S.A. They insisted that either you yourself or a deputation or a goodwill mission must go to America, China and Russia. Our case is going by default in America. Please discuss it with Maulana and if it is desirable with Gandhiji. Both now and for the postwar period, it is absolutely essential for us to have constant contacts with America and China if not also with the Middle East and Turkey. The Chinese friends are most anxious that we should keep in the closest touch with America. A small goodwill mission to China just now may not cost us anything, for the Americans may easily arrange for free transport. I believe some of them have discussed it with you—so one of them said.

By the way New Delhi is convinced that Gandhiji is likely to go ahead with his programme 'to rescue the Congress from stagnation'. Schemes of non-official propaganda in America are also being considered. One only hears rumours, but probably they are well-founded.

With love from both of us,

Asaf

63. Jawaharlal Nehru to Maulana Azad, Allahabad, 5 June 1942, Urging Him to Have Talks with M.K. Gandhi
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 357–8.

My dear Maulana,

Ever since my return to Allahabad I have been anxiously waiting for news from you. I have sent you three telegrams but so far there has been no reply. I do hope you are well.

Ordinarily it would not have mattered much if I stayed here a few days more or not. I have plenty of work to do here. But I feel a little oppressed at the fact that big things are happening and we are passively looking on. I know that we cannot do much but even so this inactive condition is bound to injure the Congress. What we should do is another matter.

Inevitably this depends on full and frank talks with Gandhiji. He has taken up a certain attitude, with part of which I agree and part of which I do not. Or rather it would be more correct to say that I do not agree with his approach though generally speaking I agree with the actual work to be done. That of course is an old argument between us. But in the present circumstances it has ceased to be academic and is likely to affect all our work. Therefore it is essential, as you yourself suggested, to have these talks with Gandhiji and not allow matters to drift any further. My brief talk with him last week, short as it was, had I think some good effect.

When I came away from Wardha, it was understood that I should be back by about the 4th June. It was presumed then that you would be going there about that time or earlier...

I feel that I should now go to Wardha as soon as possible ... Even if I get there a day or two before you, I shall of course wait for you and remain there as long as you wish....

Yours,

Jawaharlal Nehru

64. Excerpts from Louis Fischer's Interview with M.K. Gandhi,
5–8 June 1942, about British Withdrawal
CWMG, Vol. 76, Appendix V, pp. 430–51.

L.F. When I hear a suggestion about some arrangement for the future I try to imagine how it would look if it were actually adopted. I am sure you have done the same in connection with your proposal that the British withdraw. Then how do you see that withdrawal step by step?

G. First, there are the Princes who have their own armies. They might make trouble. I am not sure that there will be order when the British go. There could be chaos. I have said, 'Let the British go in an orderly fashion and leave India to God.' You may not like such unrealistic language. Then call it anarchy. That is the worst that can happen. But we will seek to prevent it. There may not be anarchy.

L.F. Could not the Indians immediately organize a government?

G. Yes. There are three elements in the political situation here: the Princes, the Muslims and Congress. They could all form a provisional government.

L.F. In what proportion would power and the posts be divided?

G. I do not know. Congress being the most powerful unit might claim the largest share. But that could be determined amicably.

L.F. It seems to me that the British cannot possibly withdraw altogether. That would mean making a present of India to Japan and England would never consent to that, nor would the United States approve. If you demand that the British pack up and go bag and baggage, you are simply asking the impossible; you are barking up a tree. You do not mean, do you, that they must also withdraw their armies?

G. You are right. No, Britain and America, and other countries too, can keep their armies here and use Indian territory as a base for military operations. I do not wish Japan to win the war. I do not want the Axis to win. But I am sure that Britain cannot win unless the Indian people become free. Britain is weaker and Britain is morally indefensible while she rules India. I do not wish to humiliate England.

L.F. But if India is to be used as a military base by the United Nations, many other things are involved. Armies do not exist in a vacuum. For instance, the United Nations would need good organization on the railroads.

G. Oh, they could operate the railroads. They would also need order in the ports where they received their supplies. They could not have riots in Bombay and Calcutta. These matters would require co-operation and common effort.

L.F. Could the terms of this collaboration be set forth in a treaty of alliance?

G. yes, we could have a written agreement with England.

L.F. Or with Britain, America and the others? Why have you never said this? I must confess that when I heard of your proposed civil disobedience movement I was prejudiced against it. I believe that it would impede the prosecution of the war. I think the war has to be fought and won. I see complete darkness for the world if the Axis win. I think we have a chance for a better world if we win.

G. There I cannot quite agree. Britain often cloaks herself in a cloth of hypocrisy, promising what she later doesn't deliver. But I accept the proposition that there is a better chance if the democracies win.

L.F. It depends on the kind of peace we make.

G. It depends on what you do during the war.

L.F. I would like to tell you that American statesmen have great sympathy for the cause of Indian freedom. The United States Government tried to dissuade Churchill from making the speech in which he declared that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India. Important men in Washington are working on the idea of a Pacific Charter, but they tell me that they have not got very far because the first principle of such a charter would be the end of imperialism, and how can we announce that while Britain holds India?

G. I am not interested in future promises. I am not interested in independence after the war. I want independence now. This will help England win the war.

L.F. Why have you not communicated your plan to the Viceroy? He should be told that you have no objection now to the use of India as a base for Allied military operations.

G. No one has asked me. I have written about my proposed civil disobedience movement in order to prepare the public for it. If you put me some direct questions in writing about this matter, I will answer them in *Harijan*. Only make the questions brief....

L.F. I come from a very poor family. I know what it means to be hungry. I have always sympathized with the downtrodden and the poor. Many Americans feel the greatest friendship

for India. I think it very unfortunate, therefore, that you have recently uttered some unfriendly words at the expense of America.

G. It was necessary. I wanted to shock. I think many Americans have a soft corner in their hearts for me, and I wished to tell them that if they continue to worship Mammon they will not make a better world. There is a danger that the democracies will defeat the Axis and become just as bad as Japan and Germany.

L.F. Of course there is a danger. But many people said that England would go Fascist if I went to war. Yet in fact England is more democratic now that she was before the war.

G. No. We see in India that this is not so.

L.F. At least in England.

G. It cannot be true in England and not for the Empire. I cannot depend on your future goodness. I have laboured for many decades for Indian national freedom. We cannot wait any longer. But I believe that there is goodwill for us.

England is sitting on an unexploded mine in India and it may explode any day. The hatred and resentment against Britain are so strong here that Britain can get no help for her war effort. Indians enlist in the British Army because they want to eat, but they have no feeling in their hearts which would make them wish to help England.

L.F. If you permit me to summarize the suggestions you have made today about a settlement in India, you have reversed the Cripps offer. Cripps offered you something and kept the rest for England. You are offering England something and keep the rest for India.

G. That is very true. I have turned Cripps around....

L.F. Don't you think that in view of the diversities of India you will need here a federation which will satisfy the Princes and the Muslims?

G. I am in no position to say which system would suit us better. First, the British must go. It is a matter of pure speculation what we will do later. The moment the British withdraw, the question of religious minorities disappears. If the British withdraw and there is chaos, I cannot say what form will ultimately rise out of the chaos. If I were asked what I would prefer, I would say federation and not centralization. There is bound to be a federal system of some sort. But you must be satisfied with my answer that I am not disturbed by the problem of whether we are to have a federation or not. Perhaps your cast-iron mind mocks at this. Perhaps you think that with millions unarmed and accustomed to foreign rule for centuries, we will not succeed in the civil disobedience movement which I have decided to launch.

L.F. No. I do not think that. I believe that history is moving fast and that before long you will be an independent country like China. The struggle you began years ago cannot end in any other way.

G. I do not want to be independent like China. China is helpless even now and in spite of Chiang Kai-shek. Notwithstanding China's heroism and her readiness to risk all in this war, China is not yet completely free. China should be able to say to America and England: 'We will fight our battle of independence single-handed without your aid.' That I would call independence.

I asked him how he got on in his long interview with Chiang.

G. Very well.

L.F. Only you did not understand him, and he did not understand you.

G. I found him inscrutable. Maybe it was the matter of language. We spoke through Madame Chiang. But I do not think that it was only that.

L.F. Of course China is not completely free, but freedom does not come in a day. Through this war, if we win it, China will become free. We may be approaching the Asiatic century. India and China may shape a great deal of history in the coming decades. I see no sign, however, that the British realize this. They will not go as you ask. If they could not save themselves by their arms in Singapore and Malaya, they will not save themselves by their brains in India.

G. I would like you to understand that I am not criticizing China. Only I wanted to emphasise that I do not wish to imitate China. I do not want India to be in the same predicament as China. That is why I am saying I do not want British and American soldiers here. I do not want Japanese or German soldiers here. The Japanese broadcast every day that they do not intend to keep India—they only propose to help us to win our freedom. I do not welcome their sympathy or help. I know they are not philanthropists. I want for India a respite from all foreign domination. I have become impatient. I cannot wait any longer. Our condition is worse than China's or Persia's. I may not be able to convince Congress. Men who have held office in Congress may not rise to the occasion. I will go ahead nevertheless and address myself directly to the people. But whatever happens, we are unbendable. We may be able to evolve a new order which will astonish the whole world. I would ask you to cast off your prejudices and enter into this new idea of mine of a civil disobedience campaign and try to find flaws in it if there are any. You will then be able to help our cause and to put it on a higher plane, you will be able to do justice to yourself as a writer.... I would understand your refusing to grasp anything that does not fit into your groove or that is not desirable for that groove. But if your mind cannot rise above that beaten track, then your days in Sevagram will have been wasted.

L.F. Yes, but will you help me to see the new order you speak of? I am not so sure of my own new order as to reject yours out of hand. I think India has much to contribute, but how do you see future developments?

G. You see the centre of power now is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India. That will mean that there is no power. In other words, I want the seven hundred thousand dollars now invested in the imperial Bank of England withdrawn and distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages. Then each village will have its one dollar which cannot be lost.

The seven hundred thousand dollars invested in the Imperial Bank of India could be swept away by a bomb from a Japanese plane, whereas if they were distributed among the seven hundred thousand shareholders, nobody could deprive them of their assets. There will then be voluntary co-operation between these seven hundred thousand units, voluntary co-operation—not co-operation induced by Nazi methods. Voluntary co-operation will produce real freedom and a new order vastly superior to the new order in Soviet Russia. Some say there is ruthlessness in Russia but that it is exercised for the lowest and the poorest and is good for that reason. For me it has very little good in it. Some day this ruthlessness will create an anarchy worse than we have ever seen. I am sure we will escape that anarchy here. I admit that the future society of India is largely beyond my grasp. But a system like the one I have outlined to you did exist though it undoubtedly had its weakness, else it would not have succumbed before the Moguls and the British. I would like to think that parts of it have survived, and that the roots have survived despite the ravages of British rule. Those roots and the stock are waiting

to sprout if a few drops of rain fall in the form of a transfer of British power to Indians. What the plant will be like I do not know. But it will be infinitely superior to anything we have now. Unfortunately, the requisite mood of non-violence does not exist here, but I refuse to believe that all the strenuous work of the last twenty-five years to evolve a new order has been in vain. The Congress Party will have an effective influence in shaping the new order, and the Muslim League will also have an effective influence.

L.F. I would like you to pursue this idea of the symbolic seven hundred thousand dollars. What will the villages do with the dollar that has come back to them from the imperial Bank of England.

G. One thing will happen. Today the shareholders get no return. Intermediaries take it away. If the peasants are masters of their dollars they will use them as they think best.

L.F. A peasant buries his money in the ground.

G. They will not bury their dollars in the ground because they will have to live. They will go back to the bank, their own bank and utilize it under their direction for purposes they think best. They may then build windmills or produce electricity or whatever they like. A central government will evolve, but it will act according to the wishes of the people and will be broad-based on their will....

L.F. Well, how do you actually see your impending civil disobedience movement? What shape will it take?

G. In the villages, the peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt despite official prohibition. This seems a small matter; the salt tax yields only a paltry sum to the British Government. But refusal to pay it will give the peasants the courage to think that they are capable of independent action. Their next step will be to seize the land.

L.F. With violence?

G. There may be violence, but then again the landlords may co-operate.

L.F. You are an optimist.

G. they might co-operate by fleeing....

L.F. Or they might organize violent resistance.

G. There may be fifteen days of chaos, but I think we could soon bring that under control.

L.F. You feel then that it must be confiscation without compensation?

G. Of course. It would be financially impossible for anybody to compensate the landlords.

L.F. That accounts for the villages. But that is not all of India.

G. No. Workingmen in the cities would leave their factories. The railroads would stop running.

L.F. General strike. I know that you have in the past had a large following among the peasants, but your city working-class support is not so big.

G. No, not so big. But this time the workingmen will act too, because, as I sense the mood of the country, everybody wants freedom, Hindus, Muslims, untouchables, Sikhs, workers, peasants, industrialists, Indian Civil Servants and even the Princes. The Princes know that a new wind is blowing. Things cannot go on as they have been. We cannot support a war which may perpetuate British domination. How can we fight for democracy in Japan, Germany and Italy when India is not democratic? I want to save China. I want no harm to come to China. But to collaborate we must be free. Slaves do not fight for freedom.

L.F. Do you think that the Muslims will follow you in your civil disobedience movement?

G. Not perhaps in the beginning. But they will come in when they see that the movement is succeeding.

L.F. Might not the Muslims be used to interfere with or stop the movement?

G. Undoubtedly, their leaders might try or the Government might try, but the Muslim millions do not oppose independence and they could not, therefore, oppose our measures to bring about that independence. The Muslim masses sympathize with the one overall goal of Congress; freedom for India. That is the solid rock on which Hindu-Muslim unity can be built....

L.F. you have not felt this way before, Mr. Gandhi.

G. The whole idea keeps blossoming out within me. The original idea of asking the British to go burst upon me suddenly. It was the Cripps fiasco that inspired the idea. Hardly had he gone when it seized hold of me.

L.F. Exactly when did the idea occur to you?

G. Soon after Cripps' departure. I wrote a letter to Horace Alexander in reply to his letter to me. Thereafter the idea possessed me. Then began the propaganda. Later I framed a resolution. My first feeling was, we need an answer to Cripps' failure. What a diabolical thing if the Cripps mission were without any redeeming feature. Suppose I ask them to go. The idea arose from the crushed hope that had been pretty high in our minds. We had heard good things about Cripps from Jawaharlal and others. Yet the whole mission fell flat. How, I asked myself, am I to remedy this situation? The presence of the British blocks our way. It was during my Monday day of silence that the idea was born in me. From that silence arose so many thoughts that the silence possessed me and the thoughts possessed me too and I knew I had to act for Russia and China and India. My heart goes out to China. I cannot forget my five hours with Chiang Kai-shek and his attractive partner. Even for China's sake alone I must do this. I am burdening my thoughts with the world's sorrow.

L.F. But will it not wait until after the war?

G. Because I want to act now and be useful while the war is here.

L.F. Have you any organization with which to carry on this struggle?

G. The organization is the Congress Party. But if it fails me, I have my own organization, myself. I am a man possessed by an idea. If such a man cannot get an organization, he becomes an organization.

L.F. Have you sufficient confidence in the present mood of the country? Will it follow you? This civil disobedience movement may involve heavy sacrifices for the people. Has anybody opposed your idea?

G. I had a letter today from Rajagopalachari. He is the only one opposed. I know his views. But how does he expect the Muslim League to work with him when he wishes to work with the Muslim League in order to destroy Pakistan?

L.F. Do you think Jinnah is set on Pakistan? Perhaps it is a bargaining counter with him which he will give up if Hindu-Muslim co-operation can be achieved.

G. As I have told you before, he will only give it up when the British are gone and when there is therefore nobody with whom to bargain.

L.F. So you intend to tell the British in advance when you will launch your movement?

G. Yes.

L.F. You had better not tell them too far in advance.

G. Is that a tip from you?

L.F. No.

G. They will know in good time.

L.F. If you look at this in its historic perspective, you are doing a novel and remarkable thing—you are ordaining the end of an empire.

G. Even a child can do that. I will appeal to the people's instincts. I may arouse them.

L.F. Let us try to see the possible reaction throughout the world. Your very friends, China and Russia, may appeal to you not to launch this civil disobedience movement.

G. Let them appeal to me. I may be dissuaded. But if I can get appeals to them in time, I may convert them. If you have access to men in authority here, tell them this. You are a fine listener. No humbug about you. Discuss this with them and let them show me if there are any flaws in my proposal.

L.F. Have I your authority to say this to the Viceroy?

G. Yes, you have my permission. Let him talk to me; I may be converted. I am a reasonable man. I would not like to take any step that would harm China.

L.F. Or America?

G. If America were hurt, it would hurt everybody.

L.F. Would you wish President Roosevelt to be informed about your attitude?

G. Yes. I do not wish to appeal to anybody. But I would want Mr. Roosevelt to know my plans, my views, and my readiness to compromise. Tell your President I wish to be dissuaded.

L.F. Do you expect drastic action when you launch the movement?

G. Yes. I expect it any day. I am ready. I know I may be arrested. I am ready.

65. Maulana Azad to Jawaharlal Nehru, Calcutta, 8 June 1942, about
His Proposed Visit to Wardha

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 5, NMML.

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am in receipt of your letter of 2nd June, and I got your telegram also. I wonder why my letters do not reach you. As you were reaching Allahabad on the 1st June, I had dispatched a letter on 31st May to your Allahabad address, so that you may get as soon as you reach there. Later on I sent another letter on 3rd June, in which I have informed you that I am leaving for Wardha on the 8th June, and hope that you would also be able to proceed the same day.

You have been writing to me from every place you visited in your tour. I am thankful to you for the same. I had similarly tried to keep you informed of my activities constantly, but it seems that you got my letters upto Lahore, after which you somehow missed them. I had written two letters to your Kulu address.

Possibly the letters are now-a-days delayed owing to censorship, and perhaps they are lost also. Please ask the servants of Anand Bhavan about my letter of May 31, which might have been misplaced.

Owing to the matters connected with the Medical Mission, my departure to Wardha was delayed for three or four days. The Government of Assam had put certain obstacles in the smooth working of the Mission in Silchar. I was, therefore, prepared to withdraw it. But they are after all, now being removed by the intervention of General Wood. He has further requested the Congress to send a complete Unit with fifty volunteers to Dimapur also. I am, therefore, arranging to send it. Dr. Roy is taking rest in Shillong.

However, I am leaving for Wardha on the 8th June, and I hope that you would also be able to proceed on the 8th.

I am sorry that you were troubled by not receiving my letters: but you may realize that it is not my fault.

Yours sincerely,

A.K. Azad

66. Extracts from a Statement of Jagat Narayan, Son of Lala Lakshmi Dass, Originally of Wazirabad, District Gujranwala, Now a Permanent Resident of Lyallpur (Mohalla Islam Pura)

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report on Quit India Movement (Wickenden Report)*, Appendix II (Appendices to Fortnightly Press), p. 373.

After the failure of the Cripps's Mission the Congress High Command began to think of launching a mass movement in the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Between May and July, Mrs. Kripalani, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and M. Azad paid visits to Lahore, but did not explain the trend of the proposed movement in spite of the requests of the workers. Their only message was that the Congressmen should be ready for struggle and that everywhere the Congress Committee should be activated. Accordingly we worked for the programmes mentioned above and enrolled members for the Congress so that maximum effort might be possible at the time of struggle....

67. Extract from Letter No. 1918-GO (Report No. 10), 25 May 1942, from the Governor of Orissa to the Viceroy about Mirabehn's Visit to Orissa

GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

3. We now have a visitor here in the person of Gandhi's disciple Mira Ben. She has recently seen the Chief Secretary and asked him a number of questions as regards e.g. the rounding up of boats, bicycles and conveyances; voluntary defence organizations; evacuation of villagers from the neighbourhood of aerodromes and the need in that event to provide them with land elsewhere. Wood told me that behind many of her questions there was the veiled threat that, unless Congress were satisfied, Congress must oppose. He asked her how long she proposes to stay and she replied 'indefinitely'. She added that Orissa had been allotted to her as the zone in which she should operate. Her general plan no doubt is to develop Congress propaganda on the lines that if trouble comes here, the Government will withdraw and desert the people; but even if the districts are overrun by invaders Congress will stay with the people and look after

them. In public Congress speakers have been keeping more or less to a moderate line and are occasionally helpful, but the Congress ex-Premier recently made an ill-tempered speech; and I understand that it is being legally examined to settle the question of how far it is actionable.

68. Note from SB, Orissa, 25 May 1942, about M.K. Gandhi's Intentions

GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/42, NAI.

According to an Orissa Special Branch Officer's report dated May 20th in connection with the visit of Mira Ben to Orissa, Gandhi has decided that the first experiments in connection with his projected new movement should be carried out in Orissa, where H.K. Mahtab, a staunch follower of Gandhi, has started work in the district of Balasore and has made good progress. Mira Ben is said to have found that Gandhi's theories were being well carried out in the district. She informed Orissa Congress workers that in Orissa the people must resist the scorched-earth policy, because of the special circumstances existing in the Province. She stated that the people of Orissa were at the mercy of flood and famine, they were very largely dependent on country-made boats for transport and in many places stocks of food were short. She urged upon them the necessity of retaining their boats and of resisting attempts to destroy their food-stuffs and commanded to them the slogan 'The Britishers must go'. According to the report, on the evening of May 18th shouts of 'Britishers go' were raised.

69. Mirabehn's Report Sent to M.K. Gandhi in Late May 1942 about the Situation in Orissa

Bapu's Letters to Mira (1924-1948), pp. 336-40.

Question of Invasion and Occupation by the Japanese

We may take it that the Japanese will land somewhere along the Orissa coast. Probably there will be no bombing or firing at the time of landing, as there are no defence measures on the coast. From the coast they will advance rapidly across the flat dry rice fields, where the only obstructions are rivers and ditches, now mostly dry and nowhere unfordable. As far as we are able to make out there will be no serious attempt to hold the Japanese advance until the hilly and wooded regions of the Orissa States are reached. The army of defence, whatever it is, is reported to be hidden in the jungle of these parts. It is likely to make a desperate attempt to defend the Jamshedpur road, but the chances of its being successful must be very small. That means we may expect a battle to be fought in the north-west of Orissa, after which the Japanese army will pass on into Bihar. At that time the Japanese are not likely to be broadly distributed over the country, but concentrated on their lines of communication between the sea and their advancing army. The British administration will have previously disappeared from the scene.

The problem before us is, in the event of these things happening, how are we to react?

The Japanese armies will rush over the fields and through the villages, not as avowed enemies of the population, but as chasers and destroyers of the British and American war effort. The population in its turn, is vague in its feelings. The strongest feeling is fear and distrust of the British, which is growing day by day on account of the treatment they are receiving. Anything that is not British is therefore something welcome. Here is a funny example. The villagers in

some parts say—‘Oh, the aeroplanes that make a great noise are British, but there are silent planes also, and they are Mahatma’s planes.’ I think the only thing possible for these simple, innocent people to learn is the attitude of neutrality, for it is, in reality, the only position that can be made logical to them. The British not only leave them to their fate without even instructing them in self-protection from bombing, etc., but they issue such orders as will, if obeyed, kill them before the day of battle comes. How then can they be ready enthusiastically to obstruct the Japanese who are chasing this detested Raj, especially when the Japanese are saying, ‘It is not you we have come to fight.’ But I have found the villagers ready to take up the position of neutrality. That is to say, they would leave the Japanese to pass over their fields and villages, and try as far as possible not to come in contact with them. They would hide their foodstuffs and money, and decline to serve the Japanese. But even that much resistance would be difficult to obtain in some parts, the dislike of the British Raj being so great, that anything anti-British will be welcomed with open arms. I feel we have got to try and gauge the maximum resistance which the average inhabitants may be expected to put up and maintain, and make that our definite stand. A steady, long sustained stand, though not cent per cent resistance, will be more effective in the long run than a stiff stand, which quickly breaks.

The maximum sustainable stand which we may expect from the average people is probably:

1. To resist firmly, and mostly non-violently, the commandeering by the Japanese of any land, houses or movable property.
2. To render no forced labour to the Japanese.
3. Not to take up any sort of administrative service under the Japanese. (This may be hard to control in connection with some types of city people, Government opportunists and Indians brought in from other parts.)
4. To buy nothing from the Japanese.
5. To refuse their currency and any effort on their part at setting up a Raj.
(Lack of workers and lack of time make it very hard, but we have to strive to stem the tide.)

Now as to certain difficulties and questions which arise:

1. The Japanese may offer to pay for labour, food and materials in British currency notes. Should the people refuse to sell for good prices or work for a good wage? For long sustained resistance over many months it may be difficult to prevent this. So long as they refuse to buy or take ‘service’, the exploitation danger is kept off.
2. What should be done about the rebuilding of bridges, canals etc. which the British will have blown up? We shall also need the bridges and canals. Should we, therefore, set our hands to their rebuilding, even if it means working side by side with the Japanese, or should we retire on the approach of Japanese bridge builders?
3. If Indian soldiers, who were taken prisoners in Singapore and Burma, land with the Japanese invading army, what should be our attitude towards them? Should we treat them with the same aloofness as we are to show the Japanese or should we not try to win them over to our way of thinking?
4. After the exodus (before the approaching Japanese) of the British Raj, what should we do about currency?
5. After battles have been fought and the Japanese armies will have advanced, the battlefield will be left strewn with dead and wounded. I think we must unhesitatingly

work side by side with the Japanese in burning and burying the dead and picking up and serving the wounded? The Japanese are likely to attend to the lightly wounded of their own men and take prisoner the lightly wounded of their enemy, but the rest would probably be left, and it will be our sacred duty to attend to them. For this we are from now planning the training of volunteers under the guidance of local doctors. Their services can also be used in case of internal disturbances, epidemics, etc.

6. Besides dead and wounded on the battlefield, a certain amount of rifles, revolvers and other small arms are likely to be left lying about unpicked up by the Japanese. If we do not make a point of collecting these things they are likely to fall into the hands of robbers, thieves and other bad characters, who always come down like hawks to loot a battlefield. In an unarmed country like India this would lead to much trouble. In the event of our collecting such arms and ammunition what should we do with them? My instinct is to take them out to sea and drop them in the ocean. Please tell us what you advise.

70. M.K. Gandhi to Mirabehn, Sevagram, 31 May 1942, Asking Her to Carry on With Her Work
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 173–4.

Chi Mira,

I have your very complete and illuminating letter. The report of the interview is perfect¹, your answers were straight, unequivocal and courageous. I have no criticism to make. I can only say, 'Go on as you are doing.' I can quite clearly see that you have gone to the right place at the right time. I therefore need do nothing more than come straight to your questions which are all good and relevant.

(1) I think we must tell the people what they should do. They will act according to their capacity. If we begin to judge their capacity and give directions accordingly, our directions will be halting and even compromising which they should never be. You will therefore read my instructions in that light. Remember that our attitude is that of complete non-co-operation with Japanese army, they will do as armed soldiers do, i.e., retire when they are overwhelmed. And if they do so the question of having any dealings with Japanese does not and should not arise. If, however, the people have not the courage to resist Japanese unto death and not the courage and capacity to evacuate the portion invaded by the Japanese, they will do the best they can in the light of instructions. One thing they should never do—to yield willing submission to the Japanese. That will be a cowardly act, and unworthy of freedom-loving people. They must not escape from one fire only to fall into another and probably more terrible. Their attitude therefore must always be of resistance to the Japanese. No question, therefore, arises of accepting British currency notes or Japanese coins. They will handle nothing from Japanese hands. So far as dealings with our own people are concerned they will either resort to barter or make use of such British currency that they have, in the hope that the National Government that may take the place of British Government will take up from the people all the British currency in accordance with its capacity.

(2) Question about co-operation in bridge-building is covered by the above. There can be no question of this co-operation.

(3) If Indian soldiers come in contact with our people, we must fraternize with them if they are well disposed, and invite them, if they can, to join the nation. Probably they have been brought under promise that they will deliver the country from foreign yoke. There will be no foreign yoke and they will be expected to befriend people and obey National Government that might have been set up in place of British Government. If the British have retired in an orderly manner leaving things in Indian hands, the whole thing can work splendidly and it might even be made difficult for Japanese to settle down in India or any part of it in peace, because they will have to deal with a population which will be sullen and resistant. It is difficult to say what can happen. It is enough if people are trained to cultivate the power of resistance, no matter which power is operating—the Japanese or the British.

(4) Covered by (1) above.

(5) The occasion may not come, but if it does, co-operation will be permissible and even necessary.

(6) Your answer about the arms found on the wayside is most tempting and perfectly logical. It may be followed but I would not rule out the idea of worthy people finding them and storing them in a safe place if they can. If it is impossible to store them and keep them from mischievous people yours is an ideal plan.

Love,
Bapu

¹ 'I had had an interview with two top English officials of the then Advisory regime. Since we were in possession of the fact that the Government officials were to retire to the hills, forty or fifty miles inland, the moment there was news of the Japanese coming and such files as they could not take in their motor cars were to be burnt and all bridges were to be blown up, my object at the interview was to request them to retire in an orderly fashion, leaving the administrative machinery in our hands. I specially pleaded with them to hand over the keys of the jails and also not to take away the doctors and medical supplies of the civil hospitals.' Mirabeen's explanatory note in Bapu's Letters to Mira (1924–1948), p. 340.

71. Extract from Orissa Government's Fortnightly Report, 5 June 1942

GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

Political—Miss Slade (Mira Ben) is on a visit to the Province. She came to see me and stated that she had come as an emissary from Mr. Gandhi to explain to the people here his attitude towards the war and to help to guide and steady the people in the event of a Japanese invasion. She visited the aerodrome at Chaudwar, which is in process of being formed, and stated that the villagers who had been forced to evacuate their villages should be provided with land, houses, grazing and water as far as possible, and said that Mr. Gandhi's view was that if the villagers were not properly provided for in the case of enforced evacuation he would have to instruct them to resist. Action is being taken by Government to provide facilities on these lines, to grant compensation and to make the evacuation from these aerodrome sites as easy for the villagers as possible; but the only result of her visit to the aerodrome at present seems to have been to make the villagers who were previously quite ready to accept the compensation offered adopt a more intractable attitude. She also suggested that all restrictions on the manufacture of salt in the seacoast area should be removed in view of the prevailing shortage of salt. She

referred to the instructions imposed by Government on the formation of volunteer corps i.e. that they shall work under the instructions and orders of the local officers and that where there were no Government organizations the names of volunteers shall be submitted to the local officers for approval. She stated that such Congress organizations could not be expected to take orders from District Officers, though she did not explain why, and said that in other Provinces such organisations were being formed without reference to local officers. She said that if the condition that volunteers should work under the instructions of the district officers was insisted upon, they would have to instruct their workers to non-cooperate and, if necessary, resist.... Miss Slade also stated that it was evident, as announced by the Commander-in-Chief, that no serious attempt would be made to defend these coastal areas in the event of an invasion and that officials would withdraw behind the military operating in the area and in that event the Congress would 'step into the vacuum' when the Government officials left and take charge of the situation. For this purpose it would be necessary to train volunteers in first-aid, A.R.P. and 'front-line work' generally. In particular she wished to know what arrangements had been made for leaving necessary supplies in the Hospitals. She appears to be misrepresenting the precautionary measures taken by Government, possibly in an attempt to bring Government into contempt.... Miss Slade has visited various towns in the Province advocating the peaceful withdrawal of the British from India and giving people her views of what they should do in the event of an invasion, including non-cooperating with the Japanese.

At a meeting of private medical practitioners at Cuttack she said that Congress had decided to form Red Cross units in the coastal towns of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Berhampur in order to render medical aid to the civil population in the event of an enemy invasion. She declared that events in Burma had shown that, as soon as an enemy attack developed, Government doctors left their posts, abandoning the sick and wounded. She has informed me that she is likely to stay in the Province indefinitely.

72. Note from R.M. Maxwell, 4 June 1942, regarding
Mirabehn's Visit

GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/42, NAI.

1. Mira Ben will disobey any order under the Defence of India Rules to leave Orissa. In that event we can get a conviction. If so, can she be deported from India? (This is sometimes done to European convicts but I do not remember in what circumstances it is legally possible).

2. I take it that we cannot extern a European British subject from India under the D.I.R.?

73. R.M. Maxwell to Gilbert Laithwaite, P.S. to Viceroy, 5 June 1942,
about the Effect of Mirabehn's Visit

GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

My dear Laithwaite,

Will you please refer to your demi-official letters No. 5138 and 5152 of June the 3rd and June the 4th about Mira Ben's activities in Orissa? I think we shall have to find out more from Provincial Governments about what this lady is doing and what effect she is producing before deciding what line we should take. We are aware that other emissaries of Gandhi have been sent to

Assam and Bengal and we are taking the opportunity to consult all three of these Provincial Governments. I attach a copy of the express letter that is being sent to them today.

Yours sincerely,

R.M. Maxwell
H.M.

To Chief Secretaries Assam
Bengal
Orissa

The Government of India are aware that Gandhi has recently sent special envoys to Assam, Bengal and Orissa, including certain ladies. The identity of those working in your Province is presumably known to you. Govt. of India are not clear whether main object of these envoys is to collect information on basis of which Gandhi may eventually start agitation or launch definite campaign of obstruction to necessary defence measures or themselves to work up popular feeling against such measures. Please send early report explaining nature of their activities and giving your estimate of effect they are producing and action proposed if you consider it necessary to stop them. You will no doubt bear in mind that action against Gandhi's emissaries, e.g. by prohibiting their entry in operational areas, would precipitate conflict with him. On the other hand, if they are actually inflaming popular opinion by false and exaggerated statements, importance is obvious of prompt counter-propaganda in consultation with military authorities; and, if they are sending reports to Gandhi, desirability is equally clear of intercepting and withholding their communications.

Sd/- R. Tottenham

Addl. Secy.

Copy to Govts of UP and Bihar for informations, and report if similar activities are going on in those Provinces.

74. Note from Secretary, 15 June 1942: Orissa Asking for Definite Action against Mirabehn

GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

Orissa have now asked for definite action against Miraben. I am not convinced of the validity of their grounds for not taking action themselves under Defence Rule 26 (1) (c)—if she were convicted in Orissa, she could always be transferred to a jail in some other Province if really necessary—I think that on general grounds it is perhaps better for the action taken to be by the Central Government. I suppose it is on the cards that Gandhi will take action against one of his personal lieutenants as a declaration of war; I should say however that he would only do so if he was looking for a *casus belli* and that otherwise it would have no immediate effect on his plans.

If we are to take action, we would appear to have the following alternatives:

- (i) Deportation. This would I think have to be by ordinance (... I am doubtful whether we could use the Prisoners Removal Act) and an obvious initial disadvantage would

be the delay which would be likely to occur in making the necessary arrangements. Presumably, we could not contemplate deporting her to custody in England, and I think that she would be able to obtain sufficient publicity in England to make herself a definite nuisance. I would suggest therefore that deportation would have definite disadvantages and that it is also not really necessary.

- (ii) Restriction. Varying degrees of severity are available, starting with an order by the Central Government under Defence Rule 26 (1) (c) that she shall not be in Orissa; next would be an order under Defence Rule 26 (1) (d) restricting her to a Province—I presume the C.P.; and next an order restricting her to a place—I presume Wardha, with restrictions if necessary on her conduct. (I have asked office to inquire whether she has any real residence in this country other than the Wardha Ashram; if she has and this is in a spot removed from the political stage, there would be obvious advantages in sending her there, though Gandhi would doubtless object strongly.)
- (iii) I would suggest that if we are to act at all, and we seem now to have no alternative, we should take strong action and should apply close restrictions as to place and conduct. If she breaks these restrictions, she can be convicted and sent to somewhere like Dehra Dun. If the C.P. and Wardha are agreed to, we should have to warn the C.P. Govt. but D.I.B. should I think see first on this subject.

75. Note from J. Sahay, 15 June 1942: Go Slow on Mirabehn;
Khurshed Naoroji's Report on Assam
GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

For the present and till the Working Committee of the Congress have shown their hands, we should I think go slow so as not to weaken the hands of those who may oppose Mr. Gandhi, and it would probably be sufficient if she were externed from Orissa. D.I.B. should however see first.

DAILY DIGEST

3-6-42

C.I.O.

CALCUTTA

C.B.18.

1-6-42

CONGRESS

A report prepared by a 'trusted Congress worker of Assam' has been carried by Miss Khurshed Ben Naoroji to Gandhi. The writer claims that he personally investigated and verified the facts given below:

- (1) There were seven heavy raids over Assam: two in Cachar district, four in Manipur State and one in Sadiya. (Government have reported only three in their recent communiqués).
- (2) 1786 persons lost their lives and 4209 persons received injuries.
- (3) More than 700 houses were destroyed (3/4ths of these were military barracks). Military damage was very very high.

- (4) Three densely populated large Naga villages (under military occupation) have been completely wiped out.
- (5) A.R.P. ceased to function everywhere. No alert was sounded.
- (6) Civil administration collapsed in Manipur state. Houses, ships, Government stores, etc., were looted.
- (7) No medical aid was given to the injured persons even up to forty-eight hours after the raids.
- (8) No arrangement has yet been made for the speedy disposal and identification of dead bodies.
- (9) Britishers took the first opportunity to leave the danger areas.
- (10) Dead and wounded Britishers were removed to Shillong by planes.
- (11) Cholera has broken out in an epidemic form in Manipur State, Lushai and Patkai Hills.

S.B.
LUCKNOW
G/W-7.
30-5-42

In a letter dated May 26th the Honorary General Secretary of the All-India Women's Conference has written to

Acharya J.B. Kripalani, General Secretary of Congress, informing him that one of the items on the agenda of the half-yearly meeting to the All-India Women's Conference on June 7th and 8th is the molestation of women by soldiers and asking for all the relevant Congress information on the subject.

76. From Secretary, Government of Bengal, to Home, New Delhi,
14 June 1942, about Likely Method of Agitation
GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

Your Secret Express Letter 5th June

Gandhi's envoys have not made serious attempt to work up an agitation in this Province at present although they appear to have indicated to some prominent Congress men pretexts on which agitation might be started.

Main object of mission has been to obtain information on basis of which these pretexts could be elaborated and to ascertain extent to which agitation would have popular response.

Method of agitation will be exploitation of discontent provoked by evacuation of areas for military reasons and by administration of 'denial' policy. Emissaries have seen some people affected by such measures. Agitators will encourage resistance to such measures in future.

Impossible estimate effect of emissaries' activities but any publicity given by them to cases of hardship is likely to lead to spread of discontent.

We think it better to precipitate conflict with Gandhi than to permit his envoys spread dissatisfaction. Gandhi takes full advantage of Government of India's reluctance to deal with him. We propose action on following lines to exclude propagandists from operational areas.

1. Emissaries from other provinces should receive orders to leave Bengal on arrival. If they get to a district before orders are served, they should be detained there and then be externed by Government orders.
2. Bengal propagandists will be externed from districts not their own.
3. Local men will have movements restricted or be prosecuted.

Best form of counter propaganda is expeditious payment of generous compensation, which we are endeavouring to arrange. We also think that widest possible publicity should be given to defeatist aspects of Gandhi's doctrines and to likelihood that obstruction would make success easier for Japanese worse object is not merely to replace British but to colonise, displacing agriculturists, craftsmen and all grades of 'black coated' workers.

We also urge that no attempt should be made to hush up cases of misconduct on part of troops and that publicity should be given to disciplinary action against offenders.

J.R. Blair

Secretary to the Government of Bengal

77. How to Deal with C. Rajagopalachari; Conduct of the Communists:
Letter from S.K. Patil, General Secretary, Bombay PCC, to General
Secretary, AICC, 9 June 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-7/1942, NMML.

Re: The War and the Communists in Congress

Dear Friend,

I have seen your press circular regarding Shri Rajagopalachariar's activities and what Congressmen and Congress officials are expected to do in regard to these activities. I find from the circular that the Congress has left Rajaji free to carry on pro-Pakistan propaganda because he has resigned the membership of the Working Committee. I take it that Rajaji still continues to be a member of the A.I.C.C. and also a delegate of the Congress. These are representative positions and I do not know how consistently with the responsibilities of these positions, one can be allowed to carry on the propaganda against the Congress resolution, which Rajaji has been carrying on. Please enlighten us on this subject.

There is another equally important matter. And that is the conduct of the Communists in Congress and the Royists who have made no secret of their attitude towards this war. Most of the Royists, at any rate in our Province, had resigned their membership of the Committees when they were called upon to do so before the Satyagraha was launched in 1940. Communists were then opposed to the war and they had not resigned. They are now out and since the Russo-German hostilities they have become open supporters of the war. How these people can remain members of elective committees is a point which is seriously to be considered by the Congress. In my opinion, the supporters of the war can at best remain 4-anna members of the Congress. They must not be allowed to hold any representative positions in the Congress if we

want any discipline to be maintained in that Institution. Please, therefore, consider this subject in the new circumstances that have arisen and let us have your guidance as early as you can give it. I had half a mind to take disciplinary action against some of them in our Province. But I thought that it as well that I should consult you before doing so. I am waiting your guidance.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- S.K. Patil
General Secretary

78. Reply from Sadik Ali, Office Secretary, AICC, to the General Secretary, Bombay PCC, 13 June 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-7/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

We have your letter of June 9. The General Secretary's circular to the P.C.C.s in the South about Congressmen's attitude to Rajaji's propaganda should be read together with the General Secretary's statement in reply to Rajaji's comments on the said circular....

As for disciplinary action against those who carry on anti-Congress propaganda and activities please refer to our bulletin No.1 of this year page 10. The Working Committee's decision on the subject is as follows:

'The attention of the Committee was drawn to the fact that members of the Forward bloc and the Communist Party have been carrying on for a long time anti-Congress propaganda and activities. For the Central Assembly bye-election the Forward Bloc set up a candidate of their own against the Congress nominee. The Committee decided that it was open to any P.C.C. to take disciplinary action against members of any group if their activities were against Congress policies and if they flouted Congress discipline.'

You will therefore see that it is open to you to take suitable action against those who in the opinion of your Committee are carrying on propaganda in clear defiance of the Congress policy about war.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- S. Ali
Office Secretary

79. Asaf Ali to S. Satyamurti, 9 June 1942, about M.K. Gandhi's Weekly Statements in the *Harijan*
K.V. Ramanathan (ed.), *The Satyamurti Letters*, Vol. 2, pp. 365-6.

Dear Satyamurti,

Please excuse this long delay in acknowledging your last letter....

.... I am more than ever mystified by Gandhiji's weekly statements in the *Harijan*. He first said 'Leave India to God or anarchy' and now he refers to 'gradual withdrawal.' Does not gradual withdrawal mean gradual transfer of power? He swears by arbitration of the Indo-British dispute, but says that no arbitrator can be found. He says that the recognition of the

right of self-determination is superfluous because every individual inherently possesses it! And yet he will not be a party to its declaration. When the British withdraw he maintains Hindus and Muslims will agree or fight. And then they can separate either by agreement or by force! This is stating the obvious without any gain. Once again, resistance to the invader by means of non-violent non-co-operation means that India will attain freedom without shedding a drop of blood. But the next moment he visualizes the death of hundreds of thousands of non-violent resisters.

Of course, there is a mysterious consistency behind all this, but who in the practical world of today can follow the inwardness of these gems of non-violent philosophy? I fear there is no tangible link between such profound negation and the mad world of action we live in. This oversimplification of the most complex of human problems must appear very seductive to the minds which are warped by impotent rage or by the desire for short-cuts, nostrums and easy slogans. But I cannot pick my way to any clarity of thought or the logic of reality out of this haze of saintly complacency. I love and respect him as one would his father; but I cannot keep pace with his mysterious march to heaven. This is heresy or even blasphemy, but I cannot change my mental make-up. When he is worldly wise, he is wiser than all of us, but when he follows the logic of his faith, he confronts us all with impossible conundrums.

Yours sincerely,

M. Asaf Ali

80. M.K. Gandhi to Chiang Kai-shek, 14 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 223–6.

Dear Generalissimo,

I can never forget the 5 hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problems still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled if at all by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China, and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to

the other country and to world peace. That domination must therefore be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free, we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in nonviolence and of my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation could turn to it. That faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realize that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the government in free India would be formed by the various elements composing the nation.

Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated (the Indian Army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure). They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with nonviolence, cannot, under the foreign yoke, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that free India can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many, like me, feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make that effort there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out for our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, and I am sure that government of free India would agree, that the Allied powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operations against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you an assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not inure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am now also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say any movement against the British Government with which I may be concerned will be essentially nonviolent. I am

straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk however great.

Very soon you will have completed 5 years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit. To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will cooperate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

In anticipation of your permission, I am taking the liberty of publishing this letter in Harijan.

Yours sincerely,

M.K. Gandhi

81. M.K. Gandhi on the Possible Developments in the Future,
14 June 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 219–20.

QUESTION BOX

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Q. What will you do if in response to your invitation the British Government withdraws from India and as you predict there is chaos in the country? What advice will you give to the workers who follow you? What non-violent steps will you take to put an end to the chaos?

A. If such a situation arises I myself and my co-workers will take such steps as are necessary to overcome the chaos. That is to say, we shall plead with those who are responsible for creating the chaos and dissuade them. If in doing so we have to die we shall die. If we have enough co-workers with the spirit of non-violence in them the chaos will soon come to an end. Here one must bear in mind that there is no place for the non-violence of the weak once the British Government withdraws. Those who want to plunder and loot are neither going to arrest anyone nor show mercy to anyone. Because they themselves are weak they will not have any other slogan except 'kill, kill' and it will not be easy to arouse in them feelings of kindness or to appeal to their reason. In other words we shall have to sacrifice many lives to awaken the humanity of such men.

I am afraid when there is chaos non-violence alone will not operate. Some other agencies will have appeared which will be engaging themselves in subduing by force those who indulge in looting and plundering. When there is chaos it will be a test for everyone.

IF YOU ARE ARRESTED

Q. What will you do if the Government arrests you because of your strong writings appearing in the Harijan? And what will happen if all the other leading Congressmen are also arrested?

A. I can't say at the moment what we shall do in the jail if the Government arrests me and others because I myself do not know. I shall have to do what occurs to me at the time. What

is more important is what those who stay behind will do. The conditions which are imposed every time will not be there this time. There will be only one condition, that of ahimsa, and that is indispensable. This should not be interpreted to mean that people will be exempted from constructive work. Those who know its value will never give it up. But when masses are called upon to sacrifice themselves on the altar of independence some specified conditions will be relaxed as had been done in the earlier mass movements. So when the leaders are arrested every Indian will consider himself a leader and will sacrifice himself, and will not worry if his action results in anarchy. The blame for the anarchy will go to the Government which under the pretext of anarchy or under some other pretext goes on consolidating its own anarchy. Our ahimsa will remain lame as long as we do not get rid of the fear of anarchy.

This is the time to prove that there is no power stronger than ahimsa in this world.

[From Hindi]

82. Resolution Passed by the Delhi PCC at Its Meeting Held on 15 June 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-8/1942, NMML.

The Provincial Congress Committee have carefully considered the reports of the activities of a section of youngmen who have deemed it desirable to go about raising certain slogans which are not consistent with the policy of the Congress. The P.C.C. wish to make it clear that no such rejection of and attack on the fundamental Congress policy can be permitted from within the Congress by persons who are members or office bearer [*sic*] of Congress organization. Such an adoption of a line of policy or activity opposed to the Congress policy is not only subversive of all discipline and undermines the Congress organization, but is highly injurious to the nation. No one can be permitted to remain a Congress member and at the same time to discredit the organization and undermine its policy. The Congress is convinced that so long as India is not actually free and its Government has not passed into popular control, no war conducted by the Government of the day can possibly become the people's war.

Any expression of opinion to the contrary is a delusion and harmful to the true interests of the people themselves. Disciplinary action will have to be taken against all such Congressmen who have adopted and are pursuing policies which are diametrically opposed to the Congress policy and programme.

83. Policy to Be Adopted towards M.K. Gandhi: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for India, 16 June 1942

TOP, Vol. 2, pp. 217-8.

India Office, 16 June 1942

As I mentioned to the War Cabinet on 15th June (War Cabinet Conclusions 74 (42) Minute 3) there are increasing indications that Gandhi is abandoning his previously declared policy of refraining from embarrassing Government and is planning to lead Congress into some widespread movement with the aim of compelling the British to withdraw from India....

So far it is uncertain what degree of support Gandhi may receive from Nehru (though in a recent utterance Gandhi says that he and Nehru have drawn closer together of late and the

Viceroy has received reports that Nehru has given way to Gandhi's views), or from the Congress Working Committee which was in session last week. There has undoubtedly been a division of opinion in Congress circles but no evidence yet of a substantial breakaway from Gandhi's unofficial leadership. Nor is it clear what form the threatened movement will take: mass civil disobedience is suggested, which may be in the form of a no-tax campaign, or resistance to military measures in Eastern India (evacuation of villages, clearance of ground for aerodromes etc.). Whatever the actual plans may be, we must be prepared for a movement instigated by Gandhi to defy the law of the land, and incidentally to obstruct the war effort.

A further statement by Gandhi reported in the *Times* of 15th June bears on the surface a less sinister colour: it may however be no more than a deliberate *diminuendo* for the purpose of keeping matters from openly reaching the boiling point before the Working Committee of Congress meets at the beginning of July.

The Viceroy, while recognizing the hold that Gandhi has won on world opinion, particularly in the U.S.A., sees that the time may be imminent when active measures will have to be taken to restrain Gandhi and Congress. He is anxious that the Cabinet should be aware beforehand of the situation which may develop shortly and which may involve repressive measures: even Gandhi cannot be permitted to flout the law of the land and must be treated like any other law-breaker, particularly if it is evident that his actions are directed to the frustration of our war effort in the East and to the undermining of our position in India.

As it is highly important that opinion (particularly in America) should not be taken by surprise if repressive measures are forced on us, I am taking steps to warn His Majesty's Representatives in Washington, Kuibyshev and Chungking and the united Kingdom High Commissioners in the Dominions, of the present situation and its possible outcome in a message which might be used as guidance to responsible Editors.

The memorandum is for the information only of the War Cabinet at the present stage, and is circulated in order that the background of possible developments may be readily available. It is not unlikely that early next month a decision of great importance may have to be taken—and at short notice.

84. 'Communists Must Be Expelled': Demonstration before Punjab Congress Cabinet Meeting

The Bombay Chronicle, 16 June 1942.

Lahore, June 15

The Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee has decided to appoint a Sub-Committee to recommend the nature of disciplinary action which should be taken against the Communists and other Congressmen who are carrying on propaganda against the Congress party.

Before the meeting started a number of Socialists and students staged a demonstration in front of the offices of the P.P.C.

As the members of the Working Committee arrived, the demonstrators raised slogans demanding expulsion of the Communists from the Congress.



85. Communist Youngmen Carrying on Pro-war Propaganda: Letter from General Secretary, Delhi PCC, to Maulana Azad, 18 June 1942 AICC Papers, F. No. P-8/1942, NMML.

Revered Maulana Sahib,

I have to report that some youngmen who call themselves 'Communists' are carrying on war propaganda by taking out Prabhat Pheris and raising slogans which are not consistent with the policy and programme of the Congress. They use Congress flags, hold public meetings in which they criticize Congress policy and openly declare that the present war is now the 'people's war'. Some of them are members and office-bearer [*sic*] of the Ward Congress Committees.

The Provincial Congress Committee has had occasion to invite their attention by means of a resolution which has been widely circulated through the press and hand bills. Copies of the same are enclosed for your kind perusal. Since the question is of an All India importance and a uniform course of conduct has to be laid down for the guidance of those who are pursuing diametrically opposite policy, I therefore request that you may be pleased to advise all Provincial Congress Committees as to the manner in which these undesirable activities are to be counteracted.

In this connection I have to enquire if the mere expression of views inconsistent with the Congress policy by those who are within the Congress is or is not sufficient to bring them within the purview of the disciplinary rules.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-

General Secretary,
Provincial Congress Committee, Delhi

86. Extract from an Intercepted Letter, 19 June 1942, from Bul, Sevagram, Wardha (Miss Khurshed Naoroji) to Jawaharlal Nehru, Allahabad

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, p. 241.

'Things are fast developing from our side and I daresay the full implications of the movement will be put before you at Bombay. As I write this I have been asked to read a rough draft of an article which will appear next week on the Japanese. I think it makes our position clear and it's Bapu's way of putting it.

'We have been asked to think over Bapu's suggestion regarding his fast unto death. I don't think this matter should come up consciously but, under special circumstances, if Bapu thinks it is absolutely essential we should not stand in his way. However, I do not think any good purpose will be served by discussing it. Life or death of individuals is of no consideration before the life of a nation, but must be convinced of its need.'



87. Proceedings of the General Body Meeting of the Andhra PCC Held at Amalapuram on 19 June 1942, as Reported by the General Secretary, Endorsing the Main Resolution of the AICC

AICC Papers, F. No. P-3/1942-7, NMML.

1. This Committee wholeheartedly approves of and endorses the main resolution of the A.I.C.C. recently passed at Allahabad and invites the attention of the country to its operative clause at the end.

2. Swaraj is not merely an end but the process to be worked up by the people to steadily develop its strength and sustain the same even after achieving the same so that the country may well be on its way to reconstruction in all social and economic aspects from the voluntary thralldom to which it submitted and break away the fetters of the soul which it has cheerfully agreed to wear so long.

3. To this end the Committee while congratulating the hearty response of Andhra Desa to the call of the Charaka and the spreading of the village industries, takes this opportunity to warn the country that unless every person learns to grow his own kapas¹, card his own cotton and make his own slivers, spinning stands in great jeopardy and khaddar itself will not rise to its level in quality which it is our universal desire it should attain. It is earnestly hoped that the whole Andhra Desa will ere long be so organized so as to make every village or group of ten villages self-sufficient as regards food, clothing and other necessities of life.

4. The Committee finally invites the public attention to the fact that all the industry and authority should pass to the village instead of villagers flocking and crowding to the seats of industry and authority in towns and the people will once again be charged with that supreme moral and economic powers of self-defence by shifting all sovereignty to the seat of its origin.

5. The committee takes this opportunity to express its fullest confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the guidance that he may give to the nation in this hour of national peril.

¹ Cotton.

88. M.K. Gandhi on Sir Stafford Cripps's Statements:¹ Interview to the United Press, 19 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 235-6.

In an interview by the representative of the United Press of London regarding Sir Stafford Cripps' statement published in the Press Gandhiji said: I have read Sir Stafford Cripps' statement to the United Press representative in London. It is not conducive to the proper understanding between different parties, if ascertainable facts are not admitted by all. Sir Stafford knows that I was disinclined to proceed to New

Delhi. Having gone there, I intended to return the same day that I reached there. But Maulana Saheb would not let me go. I wish that I could have induced the Working Committee to take up its stand on pure non-violence. But it did not and could not. With it, rightly, politics were all important and it could not, not having the conviction,

allow its deliberations to be affected by the issue of non-violence. The deliberations, therefore, of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part.

Therefore, the negotiations had nothing to do at any stage with the question of non-violence. I would not have brought out this fact, if it was not relevant to a calm consideration of the situation that faces British and Indian statesmen. Nor do I like Sir Stafford's description of my appeal for withdrawal of the British power as a walk-out. The appeal has been made in no offensive mood. It is the friendliest thing that I could do.

It is conceived in the interest of the Allied cause. I have made it in a purely non-violent spirit and as a non-violent step. But this is merely personal to me. It is necessary to remember in considering my proposal that it is essentially a non-violent gesture. Such non-violence as India has or may have becomes impotent without the Withdrawal of the British power—even as that part of India which will put up an

armed fight becomes impotent. The step that I have conceived overcomes all difficulties, shuts all controversy about violence and non-violence and immediately frees India to offer her best help to the Allied cause and more especially to China which is in imminent danger. I am convinced that the independence of India, which the withdrawal of the British power involves, would ensure China's freedom and put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis.

¹ On June 16 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps referring to Gandhiji's repeated demand for British withdrawal from India had observed: 'We are not going to walk out of India right in the middle of the war though we have no wish to remain there for any imperialistic reasons.'

89. Excerpts from G. Ahmed's Secret Report Titled 'Congress and the War', 20 June 1942

GOI Home Political File No. R3/1/347, NAI.

.... 8. When the Working Committee foregathered at Bardoli towards the end of December for the first time after a lapse of some fifteen months, it found that the differences of opinion among the members over the question of the application of the policy of non-violence had perceptibly hardened during the intervening period. Members who subscribed to Gandhi's pacifist theories were more than ever adamant in their opposition to armed intervention in the war and among the group which favoured co-operation with the British government in the war, there were much uncertainty and confusion born of a strong distaste for any course of action which might incur Gandhi's displeasure. After a good deal of wrangling, the policy enunciated in the Bombay resolution was restored and it was reiterated that only 'a free and independent India' was prepared to undertake 'the defence of the country on a national basis'. The Chinese people were felicitated on their 'unparalleled heroism' and it was stated that it would be a tragedy if the 'cataclysm of war involved the destruction of (Soviet) endeavour and achievement'. No reference was made to the Japanese declaration of war against Great Britain and the United States of America which had taken place early in December. The resolution was published as representing the unanimous decision of the Working Committee but it was an open secret that Gandhi's supporters were far from satisfied and had been prevented only by extraneous considerations from forcing a split in the Congress high command.

9. The All-India Congress Committee assembled at Wardha, in January 1942, in an atmosphere tense with excitement. Abul Kalam Azad explained the point of view of members of his way of thinking: Gandhi was opposed to participation in the war solely on the ground of non-violence and was not prepared to accept the independence of India if it was to be secured

‘at the cost of non-violence and on the condition that the country should participate in the war’; but that was not Azad’s opinion nor of those who agreed with him and were prepared to co-operate provided ‘certain vital conditions’ were fulfilled. Rajendra Prasad voiced the contrary view: ‘Our belief is that arms have not settled any dispute in the world nor are they ever likely to do so in future.... It is politically wrong in our opinion to involve the country in war at this time.... Gandhi, who was present at the meeting, gave a personal exposition of his philosophy: ‘Ahimsa with me is a creed, the breath of my life....’ Notwithstanding these considerations he fervently appealed against a split in Congress and urged the unreserved acceptance of the Bardoli resolution which, in accordance with his wishes, was ratified by the All-India Congress Committee. The crisis was averted for the time being but, as time passed, internal differences were destined to assert themselves with an ever increasing force.

10. A short period of waiting then followed. The Congress attitude of complete passivity was, however, temporarily disturbed as a result of the visit of Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek to India. This visit, which took place in February, made a profound impression on Indian political leaders of all shades of opinion and particularly on Nehru, who immediately set himself up as an ardent propagandist of ‘the Chiang cult’. Admiration for China’s heroic struggle against a nefarious oppressor was expressed on all sides and many Congress spokesmen vied with one another in assuring the Marshal that India would, if it could, help India in stemming the tide of Japanese aggression but that its fight for independence must take precedence over all other considerations.

11. The announcement made in the House of Commons on March 11th that the British Government had deputed Sir Stafford Cripps to proceed to India with certain constitutional proposals for discussion with leaders of important Indian parties, was the precursor of intense political activity in this country. Expectations of great impending changes rose to the highest pitch everywhere and all parties began to take stock of their position and prepare themselves for pressing to the utmost their various and mutually irreconcilable demands for political advancement. Sir Stafford arrived in India on March 22nd; the British War Cabinet’s proposals were made public on March 29th; and on April 12th Sir Stafford left India when it became clear that Congress was not prepared to play and that a common measure of agreement on the part of the various political groups was not forthcoming.

12. As was natural, Congress took a leading part in the consultations which followed Sir Stafford’s visit to this country. The Working Committee remained in session almost continuously for nearly a fortnight; Gandhi was present during the first few days and participated prominently in the deliberations; while Abul Kalam Azad and Nehru—the latter more than the former—conducted the actual negotiations with Sir Stafford on behalf of the Committee. All non-Congressmen and many Congressmen were genuinely surprised that India’s right to independence had been recognized and that the cardinal Congress demand for the framing of a constitution by a Constituent Assembly had been conceded. But Congress technique did not permit of a ready acceptance of the British constitutional proposals. Since the outbreak of hostilities in Europe the Congress line had been to ask the British Government to pay the price of India’s help in the prosecution of the war and, as time passed, to raise that price; every offer of settlement made by the British Government was, consequently, rejected in the hope of a better offer. On this occasion too, the bargaining spirit prevailed. In the resolution passed by the Working Committee on April 2nd objections were raised that immediate independence had been postponed to an ‘uncertain future’ and had not been conferred on the States people;

that non-representative elements were to be associated with the proposed constitution-making body; that the principle of non-accession of Provinces to the Indian Union had been accepted in advance; and that the portfolio of Defence had been reserved.... The British proposals were, therefore, rejected.

13. The question of non-violence was not raised—it was probably felt that the other reasons adduced in the resolution were sufficient to justify a rejection of the proposals—but it may be safely assumed that it was present in the minds of Gandhi and his friends in the Working Committee. Gandhi was reported at the time to be dissatisfied with the proposals on political as well as ideological grounds; and when, after his departure, Abul Kalam Azad and Nehru persisted in negotiating for a reconsideration of the Defence issue, his principal henchman, Rajendra Prasad, significantly assured a friend: ‘Everything will be decided according to Gandhi’s will’. And so it was. When the discussions ultimately broke down on the restricted issue of how the new provisional Government was to function, Gandhi’s coterie in the Working Committee heaved a sigh of relief.

14. Why the Congress leaders at the last minute decided to lay disproportionate stress on a matter which had hardly been mentioned in the earlier stages, remains something of a mystery. Although ‘officially’ the Working Committee had rejected the British proposals on sundry grounds, the keenness with which Azad and Nehru continued to pursue the negotiations indicated—apart from the readily understandable tendency to bargain—a distinct desire to associate Congress with the governmental machinery at the Centre. The purpose of this association, according to the Congress President, was ‘to organize Defence both intensively and on the widest popular basis and to create a mass psychology of resistance to an invader.’ Nehru put the same point in a more personal way when he said: ‘It is my extreme desire to find a way out and make India function effectively for defence and make the war a popular effort—so great was my desire that some things I have stood for during the last quarter of a century, things which I could never have imagined for a moment I would give up, I now agreed to give up.’ Whether the impulse which prompted these sentiments would have proved lasting or not, it is impossible to say, but there is little doubt that these sentiments did influence the conduct of the Azad–Nehru group at the time. Rajagopalachariar was throughout strongly in favour of a settlement which did not ‘involve a surrender of the Congress position’. The motives of the section of the Working Committee whom Rajagopalachariar somewhat generously described as ‘escapists’, rather than ‘defeatists’, were far more open to question. This section, led by Rajendra Prasad and owing implicit allegiance to Gandhi, had on more than one previous occasion declared its uncompromising opposition to armed intervention in the war and the only form of resistance against an aggressor that it was prepared to recognize was non-violent non-co-operation. The suggestion, which gained a measure of currency at the time, that Congress reluctance to accept the British proposals and, as a corollary, to take part in the war effort arose from its unwillingness to incur the hostility of the Axis Powers by siding with the United Nations in an uncertain conflict, applied with some degree of aptness to this section.

15. A clearer insight into the cleavage of the Congress high command and the inner working of the minds of believers in out and out non-violence was furnished by the proceedings of the Working Committee at Allahabad in April–May last when the All-India Congress Committee met to review the outcome of the Cripps mission. Gandhi did not attend but sent a draft resolution to the Working Committee with a recommendation for its adoption.... The resolution was a most remarkable revelation of Gandhi’s mind and led to a lively discussion in the Committee.

According to an authentic record of the debate, Rajendra Prasad pleaded for its acceptance on the ground that since Congress had only unarmed resistance to offer, Gandhi's was the right line to take in order to create a 'proper atmosphere'. Patel approvingly commented: 'The draft (resolution) says to the British, You have proved your utter incompetence. You cannot defend India. We cannot defend it either, because you won't let us. But if you withdraw, there is a chance for us!' Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Jairamdas Daulatram considered the resolution as 'comprehensive and appropriate' and commended the attempt to create 'an atmosphere of neutrality'. Nehru vehemently opposed the resolution, 'Withdrawal of troops and the whole apparatus of civil administration', he observed, 'will create a vacuum which cannot be filled up immediately.... If Gandhi's approach is accepted, we become passive partners of the Axis Powers.... The whole thought and background of the draft is one of favouring Japan.... It is Gandhiji's feeling that Japan and Germany will win. The feeling unconsciously governs his decision....' Azad likewise, but not so strongly, demurred: had he felt that Japan was better than Britain, he would have said so in public, but that was not the case; Gandhi's prescription was the only alternative but he doubted its effectiveness. Bhulabhai Desai and G.B. Pant maintained that the resolution was contrary to previous Congress decisions, while Asaf Ali criticized it as implying acceptance of non-violence 'for all time'. Rajagopalachariar was frankly condemnatory: 'Do not run into the arms of Japan, which is what the resolution comes to'.

16. When Gandhi's draft proved too large a pill for the Working Committee to swallow, Rajendra Prasad undertook to amend it so as to exclude from it the more patently pro-Japanese expressions and to modify the form rather than the substance, of others. Nehru refused to accept Rajendra Prasad's amended resolution and was commissioned to draft an alternative resolution which he did. When these two resolutions were put to vote, Rajendra Prasad, Patel, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Shankarrao Deo, P.C. Ghosh, J.B. Kripalani and (presumably) Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya voted for the former, while Jawaharlal Nehru, G.B. Pant, Bhulabhai Desai and Asaf Ali favoured the latter. (By this time, Rajagopalachariar had resigned from the Working Committee and, therefore, did not vote. Dr. Khan Sahib and Dr. Syed Mahmud did not attend the meeting). A split seemed inevitable, but a last minute appeal by the President saved the situation. He pleaded for unanimous acceptance of Nehru's draft on the significant plea that it did not materially differ from Rajendra Prasad's, although both Nehru and Prasad maintained that there was a vital difference in approach. Ultimately, the Rajendra Prasad group gave way and Nehru's resolution was passed.

17. It was a minority decision, therefore, which the All-India Congress Committee ratified at Allahabad. 'India's participation in the war', so ran an important passage in the resolution, 'was a purely British net imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives.... If India were free, she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies would in any event have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom and her defence would have been organized on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership.... A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of an aggressor attacking her'. But the operative part of the resolution differed in no way from Gandhi's draft. 'In case an invasion takes place it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-cooperation'. That was the farthest Congress was prepared to go in the existing circumstances....

22. Enough has been said to illustrate the progressive hardening of Gandhi's attitude towards the Allied cause and his fixed determination to destroy country's 'will to fight' even though the consequences of such action may prove disastrous to India's security. In so far as his latest change of outlook modified his earlier statements, the position would appear, outwardly at least, to have improved. Experience has, however, led to the belief that he is at all times an opportunist and that his sincerity is to be doubted; he has the immutable long-range plan which he is determined to bring to fruition with or without subterfuge.

23. It now remains to examine some additional aspects of the individual reactions of members of the Congress Working Committee. The composition of this body has remained practically unchanged for some years past and its members have, in course of time, come to have a paralyzing effect on Congress politics which, as a result, are now primarily characterized by a totalitarian rigidity and a lamentable imperviousness to fresh ideas and influences. Gandhi's principal supporter in the Congress junta is Rajendra Prasad, who was President of the Indian National Congress in 1939 when the war broke out. The few statements made by him at the time were, by comparison with Gandhi's distinctly less capable of variable interpretation and were openly critical. In January, 1940, he declared that the Congress goal was 'independence pure and simple', and in February: 'Britain cannot have it both ways. It cannot claim the war to be a fight for democracy and freedom and at the same time deny self-determination and independence to India.' After he exhibited for a time an exceptionally responsible attitude towards the war, he maintained, in a published statement, that England was any day better than the Axis Powers and that he could not but wish for an Allied victory. He, however, swerved away from this position not long afterwards and turned into one of the most fanatical votaries of non-violence. When Russia declared war on Germany in June 1941, a suggestion was made in some quarters that a revision of the Congress programme in the light of the new circumstances appeared to be necessary. Rajendra Prasad held that the argument was 'wholly irrelevant' and, in a letter to Kripalani, observed: 'Our position was not based on the non-participation in the war of Russia, and the (German) attack on Russia does not appear to me to alter the situation in any way'. To a London correspondent he wrote in October: 'The feeling is growing that the war is being fought between two rival forces each seeking to establish its hegemony as against the other—the hegemony of the German-speaking people in Europe as against that of the English-speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic.... Nobody has any faith in the tall talk about democracy and even American motives are not regarded as above suspicion, so far as our future is concerned'. Congress, he added, had no choice but 'to fall in line with those who did not want participation in the war either for political reasons or out of moral considerations'. Gandhi's latest demand for British withdrawal has met with his full approval; the British must go; only then India would be able to live its 'true life' and make its 'own arrangements'; the period of transition might prove 'a difficult period but it need not necessarily be so'. In a public speech on May 7th, he declared: 'The time has come when we should say to the Britishers: "Get away and we shall manage our affairs", as we are unnecessarily made to suffer untold hardships owing to British occupation, which has made us enemy targets although we bear enmity to none.... Had India been free, she would have remained neutral in this devastating war'. In Press interview the same day, he was asked if Congress would co-operate in the war effort if the British Government made a satisfactory response to Indian political aspirations. His reply was most significant: 'As I have said there can be no negotiations except on the basis of independence which implies freedom to determine our own foreign policy. It will cease to

be independence if that foreign policy is laid down by others as a condition precedent to a settlement.'

24. Vallabhbhai Patel and J.B. Kripalani are among the more important representatives of the Gandhian school of thought. Recently, on a few occasions, Patel has made speeches and stereotyped lines identifying himself completely with Gandhi's theories. On March 15th, he said: 'The light of the Empire is fading: we should, therefore, light our country with oil lamps'. And on May 29th: 'The British must withdraw from India; if they do not, they would be beaten in India too. England had committed many sins and was receiving a just retribution.' Kripalani, Shankarrao Deo, P.C. Ghose and Pattabhi Sitaramayya share these views and recognize non-violent non-cooperation as the only means of resisting an aggressor. Abdul Ghaffar Khan (who is no longer a member of the Working Committee) is a firm believer in non-violence. So is his brother and successor, Dr. Khan Sahib, who is, however, unconnected with the war. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's sympathies are sometimes with Gandhi and more frequently against him, but her interest in Congress gatherings is essentially 'social' and not strictly political.

25. Abul Kalam Azad and Nehru head the group that declines to accept unadulterated non-violence as the panacea for all ills. The limitations which this group seems to impose on the principle of non-violence have been discussed in preceding paragraphs. As recently as March last, the Congress President recapitulated the position in a letter to a friend: 'Gandhiji gave (Congress) the moral weapon of non-violence, which it grasped strongly.... It is my conviction that whatever political awakening and sense of national struggle has been aroused in India during the last twenty-two years is mainly due to the adoption of the non-violent method. And Congressmen can commit no greater blunder than to lay down this successful weapon (but is Congress ready) to decide that the future independent India will not make use of army and weapons as a State for its defence and will not participate in any war under any circumstances.... Gandhiji feels that we should decide once for all that we want to carry the non-violent method to the final limit. I feel that we cannot do so...and the majority of the Congress opinion supports me in this respect.' On one point he is emphatically clear: 'Only a free India can defend herself'.

20. Nehru is the 'official' draftsman of Congress resolutions a close study of which is as much a revelation of his as of the Congress mind. Since the commencement of the war, he has insisted that on no account would Congress extend any help to Britain till India's demand for complete independence and self-determination was fully conceded. Once this was done, however, he declares that Congress will be prepared to take a full share in the prosecution of the war. Nehru is perhaps the one Congress leader who has some appreciation of the diverse and vital issues involved in the present war; and unlike Gandhi, he has pretensions to an 'international outlook'—his best claim to prominence being that he has put Congress on the international map. But, unfortunately, he is lamentably fickle and vacillating a veritable Hamlet in politics whose vision is clouded by confusion and perplexity, a victim of conflicting impulses which sway him from time to time in opposite directions; and dominated by an inveterate hatred of the British (and everything signified by the term 'British Imperialism') and by a complete, and often inexplicable, subservience to Gandhi's will against his better judgment. His imperfections colour his politics with results which are frequently startlingly fantastic.

27. Nehru's implacable hostility towards Britain is seen at its bitterest in two of his writings which came to notice in 1940. In a letter to an American correspondent, he bitterly complained on May 22nd: 'While Britain has undoubtedly done much good to India consciously or

unconsciously, she has injured us greatly in regard to many of the basic things of life.... I feel therefore that an essential preliminary to any reorganization is the severance of India from the British Empire.... We have made it clear that we do not wish to hamper Britain or to take advantage of her difficulties. But at the same time there is a grave danger that if we allow ourselves to be utilized to Imperial advantage we shall suffer greatly and so will the men of good will in Britain and elsewhere.' A little later, in an article entitled 'The Parting of the Ways', he developed this theme further: 'We want independence and not dominion or any other status. Every thinking person knows that the whole conception of dominion status belongs to past history: it has no future. It cannot survive the war, whatever the result of this war. But whether it survives or not, we want none of it. We do not want to be bound down to a group of nations which has dominated and exploited over us: we will not be in an empire in some parts of which we are treated as helots and where racialism runs riot. We want to cut adrift from the financial domination of the City of London ...'

28. Mention has already been made of the effect that the visit to India of Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek in February 1942, had on Nehru. Since this visit—and with the threat to India's eastern frontiers developing with alarming rapidity—he has made a series of high sounding declarations of his determination to resist Axis aggression. But a careful scrutiny of his speeches discloses that while the sincerity of his convictions is for the most part undeniable, the futility of his practical suggestions is equally apparent. Discussing the possibility of an invading army entering India, he stated at a Press conference on February 15th that the position, in a military sense, would be difficult and 'it may be from a purely practical consideration, apart from pacifism, that Mahatma Gandhi's method (of non-violent resistance) is the best alternative.' His warnings against building false hopes on Axis 'promises' of kind treatment of Indians, if Indians behaved, have been frequent and frank. In March, he informed an enquirer: 'Latterly some people afraid of Japanese victory or expecting it, wanted to tone down (the Congress policy of denunciation of the Axis Powers). That may be realism, though I do not think so.... Daily threats are held out through broadcasts from Tokyo and Berlin to those Indians who may oppose them. Whatever the Indians may or may not have learnt, I hope that they have learnt at least not to give way to threats.' At a public meeting on April 8th, he advised the people not to play the role of mere spectators of the mighty events which were taking place and not to hesitate to denounce the Japanese from fear of antagonizing them. His many speeches in April registered a strongly militant mood and, in some of them, he talked vaguely of guerilla warfare as a likely means of harassing an aggressor. This immediately elicited a remarkable protest from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Gandhi's lady secretary, who enquired; 'Now, are you really going to encourage our people to take up violent resistance? Is it not a grand opportunity for us to tell the people: "You have no arms. You are a slave nation. Your first duty is to save your souls...." What is guerilla warfare going to avail? By making such statements we discard neutrality and plunge into the war.... I have a feeling that if we adopted Gandhi's lead, Japan might not even attack us. We have nothing against Japan except her war on China.' This pricked Nehru's bubble and he at once proceeded to make it clear that guerilla warfare was unthinkable except as a measure organized by the State. By the way in which he spoke at a meeting on April 18th it became clear that he had no lead to give to the people even if the worst happened. It was very difficult to lay down any positive line of action, he said; having divorced itself from the State apparatus, Congress could not join it for many reasons; in areas of military operations Congress could, in any case, do nothing; but 'much could be done by the people by non-co-operation' with the enemy.

20. Nehru's other adherents in the Working Committee are Bhulabhai Desai, G.B. Pant, Asaf Ali and Dr. Syed Mahmud, all of whom have advocated from time to time, and with varying degrees of emphasis, the pursuit of a realistic policy. Bhulabhai Desai is particularly perturbed over the line Gandhi has lately been taking. In May last, he warned Abul Kalam Azad and Nehru that Congress would be laying itself open to a charge of dishonesty, if, stampeded by Gandhi's vehemence into some kind of ill-advised action, it retraced its repeated promises of assistance in the war under previously specified conditions. On May 3rd, Asaf Ali fairly summed up the Congress position in a letter to a friend: 'We are torn between the dictates of our heads and our hearts. We have all become more or less pale shadows of Arjuna.... The whole world is slipping from under our feet and we do not know whether we should lift our little finger to save ourselves from the catastrophe that threatens us.'

30. Rajagopalachariar stands alone, in a class by himself, a fearless advocate of 'all out' resistance to the Axis Powers and determined that the manifold problems confronting India must be faced in a practical manner. His influence in the Working Committee remained steadily on the side of moderation and against (what he called) its 'do-nothing' policy. His connexion with the Committee came to an end with his resignation in May last following his sponsorship of resolutions (passed on April 23rd by the Madras Congress Legislative Party) urging the effective mobilization of public support for defensive measures and the establishment of a National Government (by acknowledging the separatist claims of the Muslim League) at a time of grave national peril. The present Congress position, as embodied in the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Allahabad on May 1st, he regards as signifying in effect 'a policy of neutrality against the Axis'—which he is not prepared to countenance. He has set himself the formidable task of converting Congress, but whether or not he will succeed remains to be seen. At the moment, he is an outcaste.

31. The main currents of Congress policy are now clear. On the political objective and the means of attaining it, all are agreed. All, except Rajagopalachariar (and, possibly, the two Muslim members of the Working Committee who have secret sympathy with his stand-point), are equally determined that so long as the demand for independence remains unfulfilled, Congress will not render assistance in the prosecution of the war. Should India be directly invaded in the meantime, non-violent resistance (whatever that may mean) will be offered to the invader. If independence is granted, the Azad-Nehru group profess to be prepared to relinquish the present policy of non-belligerency and sanction armed intervention in the war. Rajendra Prasad and his friends hold a very different view. Irrespective of whether or not the Congress constitutional demand is conceded, this group is fully resolved to oppose armed action under any circumstances. Members of this group have condemned the 'scorched earth' policy in the strongest terms, frequently declared that India has no quarrel with Japan or any other enemy Power and made no secret of their intention to secure a position of permanent neutrality for India in the present conflict. And, it must be remembered that, after Rajagopalachariar's defection, this clique now has a clear majority in the central Congress directorate. Overshadowing all, with his fingers on the controls of the Congress machine, is Gandhi. His mind is made up. Non-violence must prevail under all conditions; India's independence must be won and preserved through non-violence only; there can never be any question of armed participation in the war and, in any case, such participation can be no guarantee of success; India has no enmity against the Axis countries and all it wants is to live at peace with all nations—if necessary, by coming to terms with the enemy; the British rule is intolerable and responsible for jeopardizing

India's security; so the last hope of India's salvation lies in an immediate and complete British withdrawal from the country. The mood is desperate and full of dangerous possibilities. Hitherto a section of the Congress high command has resisted, at least partially, the total acceptance of the Gandhian creed. Will it be able to do so in future?

G. AHMED

The June 20th, 1942

90. Letter from G.A. Deshpande, Secretary, Maharashtra PCC, Poona, to General Secretary, AICC, 21 June 1942, about Extending the Date for Enrolment of Congress Members
AICC Papers, F. No. P-13/1942-6, NMML.

Dear Shri Kripalaniji,

I write this to request you to kindly extend the period of the enrollment of Congress members at least by one month and for following reasons:-

- (1) Due to acuteness of famine conditions in most of the districts of Maharashtra the work of enrollment could not progress.
- (2) Rapid rise in the prices of commodities due to war conditions also helped to discourage the workers.
- (3) Only after Allahabad session of the A.I.C.C. and especially after Mahatma Gandhi's recent Dynamic and encouraging lead the workers in the province are moving out for work.
- (4) Dislocation of communication due to war situation is a great handicap for swift movement.

I would not have really requested you to extend the period, but for the fact that, though late, the workers are serious about the work, and the results obtained so far, are promising. Fortunately last week there were heavy rains in all parts of Maharashtra and the agonies of the people due to scarcity of water are at rest.

So it will be helpful from the organization point of view, if the period is extended, by one month at least, if not by two. We are living in conditions which are far from normal and therefore, the situation demands special consideration.

Secondly it is being found that people generally show some reluctance and in many cases are unwilling to pay annas eight subscription for 1941 and 1942.

Hoping to receive an early reply,

Yours sincerely,

G.A. Deshpande
Secretary

Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, Poona.



91. M.K. Gandhi's Proposal for the Withdrawal of British Troops from India, 22 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 241–2.

My proposal for the withdrawal of the British power involves two actions. One is to deal with the present emergency, and the other to secure freedom from British supremacy. The second admits of delay. There is a lot of confusion about its implications. I am trying to the best of my ability to deal with the questions as they arise from time to time.

The first admits of no delay and demands specific action irrespective of the proposal for British withdrawal. This is in connection with (1) the behaviour of troops, (2) the impending salt famine, (3) control of food grains, (4) evacuation for the sake of the military, (5) discrimination between Europeans and Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmans on the one hand and Indians on the other.

On the first item the people have the law and public opinion wholly on their side. The Government machinery is always slow to move, more so now, when it is all pre-mortgaged for military preparations. People must everywhere learn to defend themselves against misbehaving individuals, no matter who they are. The question of non-violence and violence does not arise. No doubt the non-violent way is always the best, but where that does not come naturally the violent way is both necessary and honourable. Inaction here is rank cowardice and unmanly. It must be shunned at all cost. Pandit Nehru told me that at the stations in the north, platform hawkers have banded themselves for self-defence, so the troops are careful at those stations.

As to salt famine, the law is not quite on the people's side but right is wholly on their side. I am hoping that the Government will put the widest construction on the clause referring to salt in Gandhi–Irwin pact and allow people to manufacture salt wherever they can. And I would advise them to manufacture salt even at the risk of prosecution. Necessity knows no law. A starving man will help himself to food wherever he finds it. Rishi Vishwamitra did so.

Number three is difficult to deal with. But the same rule applies as to the second. Food cannot be manufactured as easily as salt. It is up to the merchants to band themselves to do what they can and force the hands of the Government to do the right thing by suggesting wise rules for the supply of food to the poor people at fixed prices. If this is not done in time looting shops is sure to be a daily event.

As to four, I have no doubt that the authorities may not ask people to vacate except where they are ready to offer equivalent land and buildings and cart the people and their belongings to the places prepared for them and pay them a living wage till they find suitable occupation. The people, if they have nowhere to move to, should simply refuse to vacate and suffer the consequences.

As to the fifth, the people should refuse to submit to discrimination and it will break down. Most of these difficulties take place because we have cultivated the habit of submitting to them. In the words of the late Lord Willingdon, we must learn resolutely to say 'no', when that is the real answer possible and take the consequences.

92. M.K. Gandhi's Move SUICIDAL: Editorial

The Times of India, 24 June 1942.

The Muslim League President's statement¹ must convince Mr. Gandhi that his latest political formula is a suicidal one for India. What is the curse of this country? It is that distrust to

which the King-Emperor refreedomed in his message to the Indian people broadcast by His Royal Highness to the Duke of Gloucester—distrust which His Majesty described as the impediment to a ‘deep and enduring foundation of goodwill.’ It affects all parties in their relations with the British Government and with each other. If it is Mr. Gandhi’s intention—as we are certain it must be—to banish distrust, he must now realize that his latest proposals have, on the contrary, increased it....

We do not say that Mr. Jinnah’s suspicion is justified. But the most important thing from the point of view of Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress is that distrust of Congress intentions exists and has grown much stronger as the result of Mr. Gandhi’s latest proposals. In view of that fact, is this the time for Mr. Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee to attempt to enforce their demand by resorting to lawlessness? We have shown that civil commotion in India is exactly what the Japs are looking for in order to assist them in the conquest of this country. Apart, therefore, from helping the Axis, a *satyagraha* campaign would almost certainly produce communal strife....

Surely India’s leaders must see that the present is no time for exacerbation of communal feelings; it is a time for unity in the defence of their country, in which they all have a stake. India is in peril. One enemy is on her eastern frontier, while another is showing dangerous activity in the west. As Sir Chimanlal Setalvad said with profound truth the other day: ‘The real position is that unless all India pulls together and makes a tremendous war effort, there is sure to be *Japanistan* and there will then be *Kabrastan*, the graveyard of all Indian hopes of independence.’ That indeed is the position. There is no escape from it.

¹ See section on Congress and Muslim League: Jinnah’s interview to the International News Service of America.

93. M.K. Gandhi’s Talk with Horace Alexander:¹ Sevagram, On or after 23 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 244–5.

HORACE ALEXANDER: We were wondering if it was auspicious for an English party to arrive in India, when you were asking the British to withdraw. Agatha suggested that we might have a party from India to work with us, and make of our party a mixed party.

GANDHIJI: My first writing did, I am afraid, give rise to that kind of fear. That was because I had not given expression to the whole idea in my mind. It is not my nature to work out and produce a finished thing all at once. The moment a question was asked me, I made clear that no physical withdrawal of every Englishman was meant, I meant the withdrawal of the British domination. And so every Englishman in India can convert himself into a friend—as you have come as Friends—and remain here. The condition is that every Englishman has to dismount from the horse he is riding and cease to be monarch of all he surveys and identify himself with the humblest of us. The moment he does it, he will be recognized as a member of the family.

His role as a member of the ruling caste must end forever. And so when I said ‘withdraw’, I meant ‘withdraw as masters’. The demand for withdrawal had another implication. You have to withdraw, irrespective of the wishes of anybody here. You do not need the consent of a slave to give him freedom. The slave often hugs the chains of slavery. They become part of his flesh. You have to tear them asunder and throw them away. You must withdraw because it is your duty to do so, and not wait for the unanimous consent of all the sections or groups in India.

There is thus no question of the moment being inauspicious for you. On the contrary, if you can assimilate my proposal, it is the most auspicious moment for you to arrive in India. You will meet many Englishmen here. They may have entirely misunderstood what I have said, and you have to explain to them what exactly I want them to do.

Really speaking, therefore, this should become the major part of your mission, and even the India Office who facilitated your coming here cannot possibly misunderstand you. You have, therefore, not only the humanitarian mission—there may not be any bombing here, and in this vast country even if there is bombing you may not be able to reach everywhere—but you have also this peculiar mission of interpretation and reconciliation. And it is well perhaps that your mission begins with me. Begin it with finding out what exactly is at the back of my mind by putting to me all the questions that may be agitating you.

You will see that I have used the words ‘orderly withdrawal’. I had, when I used the phrase, Burma and Singapore in mind. It was a disorderly withdrawal from there. For there left Burma and Malaya neither to God, nor to anarchy, but to the Japanese. Here I say: ‘Don’t repeat that story here. Don’t leave India to Japan, but leave India to Indians in an orderly manner.... So you have now to do what Andrews did—understand me, pitilessly cross-examine me, and then if you are convinced be my messenger.’

H.A. We dare not assume his mantle. We can but try.

¹ Horace Alexander had arrived in Sevagram on 23 June 1942.

94. Jawaharlal Nehru to Maulana Azad, 25 June 1942, Explaining His Itinerary for the Next Few Days

Correspondence with Maulana Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, NMML.

.... I am going this evening to Aligarh to attend a district conference there. I do not usually go to these conferences but I decided to attend this particular one for some special reasons. I am returning to Allahabad day after tomorrow morning. On the same night, that is the 27th, I am going to Lucknow where I shall stay for three days—the 28th, 29th and 30th. In Lucknow I shall look into the work of our Provincial office.

On the 30th night I shall leave for Gorakhpur where our Provincial Council is meeting. I expect to be there for two days—1st and 2nd July. I expect to reach Allahabad at about 9 on 3rd morning. If the train is not too late I might be able to catch the 10 o’clock to Nagpur on the same day, which means that I reach Wardha on the 4th evening.

Yours

95. Report from Office Secretary, Gujarat Prantik Samiti, 29 June 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Since we reported last there has been deterioration both in the volunteer organization and in the organization of cheap grain shops. With regard to the former, there is considerable fagging of interest. We are finding it difficult to enroll new volunteers and to keep up the enthusiasm of the enrolled ones. Firstly, there is no exciting day to day work in which we can engage the volunteers. As the organization is a non-political one, we cannot entrust them with any

political work. Secondly, an impression was gathering amongst the people that the war-danger has receded and there was no need of such an alert.

With regard to the grain shops, in many rural areas there is an acute shortage of food grains. We had made arrangements with the Provincial Government for the regular supply of grains and other essential necessities to the various districts and particularly to those centres where we had opened the cheap grain shops. We regret to say that the Government has not been able to keep up their promises in case of Surat and Broach districts, and the stocks in several shops there are fast getting exhausted. We are making every effort to make the province self-sufficient from the next season, but for this we have to depend on Government's permission to purchase stocks and the availability of transport permits.

The present state of affairs is entirely due to the disastrous method and machinery of price control and shortage of transport.

96. Report of Maharashtra PCC, 30 June 1942, of Congress Work for the Months of May and June

AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Organisation of the Nagarik Sanrakshak Dal on extensive basis, opening of central volunteer camp, collection of funds, collection for the Harijan Sevak Sangh and general Congress propaganda are the main features of Congress activity in Maharashtra during the months of May and June.

Nagarik Sanrakshak Dal: This activity was vigorously carried on in almost all the Districts. Special mention must be made of the Sholapur, Thana, W. Khandesh, Kolaba Districts. The Nagarik Sanrakshak Dal is working in about five to six hundred places in Maharashtra. At present night patrolling is the one activity in which these are engaged.

In order to coordinate, guide and direct the activities of the Dal in all places, the executive of the M.P.C.C. appointed Sjt. Devgirikar to tour the various Dist.s. Accordingly Sjt. Devgirikar visited 26 places in Sholapur district and addressed public meetings and popularized the activity.

(2) Enrollment of Congress Membership was stressed in every circular of M.P.C.C. Though not quite to the satisfaction, this work is making fairly good progress. Famine conditions, general rise in prices due to war conditions increasing difficulties in getting conveyances and above all general depression in political activity are checking the pace of this activity. Though complete figures are not available in this office, the figures of the enrollment can be safely put to be more than 30,000. Recently the rains have been most satisfactory, which will help the enrollment work.

(3) Volunteer Organisation. A central camp for the Province was conducted in Congress House, Poona from 22nd April to 31st of May. In all 144 volunteers from almost all the districts joined the camp. Sjt. S.M. Joshi the organizer of the Dal was the Chief of the Camp. Training in physical exercises, squad drills, games, lathi and lezim formed the physical side of the instruction. Daily one hour was devoted to the instruction in new method of carding and spinning. 20 lessons in Hindi were given. First-aid to the injured was taught in addition to the lessons in A.R.P. Twenty discourses were given to the campers of various subjects in politics, economics, social problems by Sjt. Shankarrao Deo, Sjt. Gadgil, Acharya Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Dr. N.S. Hardikar and others. The camp was a success and created enthusiasm in the city.

Another camp was opened at Chalisgaon for the training of volunteers in East Khandesh. It was conducted for 20 days and had 35 inmates. The camp was a success.

A non residential camp for lady volunteers was conducted for 15 days in Poona, with thirty lady volunteers.

The Seva Dal organization is slowly gaining ground in Maharashtra. It may be remarked that Rashtra Seva Sangh a Hindu communal organization is growing powerful in numbers in Maharashtra; and the Congress Seva Dal Organisers are required to face that organization.

Propaganda and collection of funds:-

(1) Sjt. Shankarrav Deo had a tour in the districts of Satara and Ahmednagar. He addressed twenty meetings and spoke on the present situation with effect. He met Congress workers at six places and discussed with them the present policy of the Congress.

(2) Sjt. N.V. Gadgil, President, M.P.C.C. who was fortunately released unconditionally on April 25th addressed several meetings in Poona and Sholapur districts and presided over a Taluka Political Conference at Karad, Dist. Satara. Government Policy re the control of prices was bitterly criticized by him in some of these meetings.

(3) Sjt. G.A. Deshpande, General Secretary, M.P.C.C. attended the District committee meetings in West Khandesh and Satara. He visited seven places the Dist.s of Poona, A'nagar, Nasik and East Khandesh. He explained to the congress workers the present situation, the Allahabad resolution and the immediate programme.

(4) Sjt. Deogirikar toured the Sholapur dist. visited 26 places and instructed the people re the Nagarik Sanrakshak Dal.

(5) G. A. Deshpande, General Secretary M.P.C.C. who was released quite recently, after completing two years imprisonment, is carrying on a campaign of meetings in the district of Nasik and is creating enthusiasm amongst the workers. Besides the above mentioned names local leaders in the Dist.s of Thana, W. Khandesh, Kolaba, Sholapur, A'Nagar, Bombay Suburban also toured in their respective areas, and carried on propaganda re the present policy and programme. Special mention must be made of the local leaders of the A'nagar Dist. who are carrying on the propaganda in spite of the repression in the dist.

97. M.K. Gandhi on Badshah Khan's Popularity, 30 June 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 261-2.

The Associated Press has circulated the following note about Khan Saheb:

The Frontier Provincial Congress Committee has released the following statement:

'We warn the public against the false propaganda that is being carried on against Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the undisputed leader of the Pathans and the Khudai Khidmatgar movement, in certain sections of the Press. It has been hinted that the differences have arisen among the workers and party-politics is raising its ugly head. Not a single Khudai Khidmatgar has so far resigned. They are all united like one man under Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's leadership. All talk about parties among them has no foundation whatsoever. All these so-called differences, etc., exist only in the imagination of a few interested people who are craving for offices and think that by encouraging such talk they can gain their end. The Government is at the back of all such propaganda. But these people have no following among the Frontier masses. Every true nationalist in the Frontier clearly realizes that we can have nothing to do with the British

Government in India, much less with offices. Whatever attraction the parliamentary programme may have elsewhere in India, it has certainly no place in the Frontier.

'Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's peaceful constructive humanitarian work among the villages for the maintenance of internal security and self-sufficiency in matters of food and cloth has further endeared him to the people especially the poor. He has been hoping to carry his message of peace and goodwill even to the neighbouring tribes. He has been devoting all his energy to raise a non-violent and peaceful army who can render true service to the people under difficult days ahead. What the Government has failed to achieve at the cost of millions of rupees he is attempting to do with purely voluntary help. He deserves the sympathy and co-operation of every man, woman and child of the Frontier in this noble work. We hope that the Frontier masses will respond to his call and the Press and journalists of India who have the true interests of the country at heart will take a dispassionate interest in his work.'

The Frontier Provincial Congress Committee has done well to pass the resolution and circulate the note. But Badshah Khan's reputation rests on much more solid ground than the resolution of the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee. It rests on the strength of selfless service rendered for nearly a quarter of a century and the affection of the people won through that service. In spite of traducers Khan Sahab has come triumphant through every ordeal so far. And I have little doubt that when the next test comes, he will show the same popularity as he has shown before.

SEVAGRAM, June 30, 1942

98. Extract from Report of General Secretary, Lahore PCC, 1 July 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-22 (Part II)/1942, NMML.

After considering your circular No.1 the Working Committee of the Punjab Provincial Congress committee in its meeting held on 11th February appointed a Sub-Committee with Dr. Gopi Chand Ji Bhargawa agent A.I.S.A; Punjab Branch as Incharge to carry on the Constructive Programme as well as Self-Sufficiency programme of the Congress. Dr. Sahib issued circulars and instructions to the District Congress Committees.... Doctor Sahib made a tour of some districts to popularize programme. In the month of May a constructive programme workers training Camp was opened through Dr. Gopi Chand at Lahore. Ten workers attended from some districts. Doctor Sahib explained them all points concerning Self-Sufficiency. Now these ten workers are carrying on the work in their respective districts.

99. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1 July 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 264-5.

DEAR FRIEND,

I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege [of] having numerous friends there both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Great Britain I need say nothing beyond mentioning that in

spite of my intense dislike of British rule, I have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my own people.

I had my legal education there. I have therefore nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will therefore accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immediately withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intention. I would like to turn into goodwill the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present war.

My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If, therefore, I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in non-violence. Under foreign rule however we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this war, except as helots.

The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organization, of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the Allied declaration that the Allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain and America has the Negro problem in her own home. But in order to avoid all complications, in my proposal I have confined myself only to India. If India becomes free, the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

In order to make my proposal foolproof I have suggested that, if the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, we must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the free Indian Government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

I hope that it would commend itself to you. Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you.

If there is any obscurity in my letter, you have but to send me word and I shall try to clear it. I hope finally that you will not resent this letter as an intrusion but take it as an approach from a friend and well-wisher of the Allies.

*I remain,
Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI
PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



100. 'Frustration All Round': Editorial on Expansion of Viceroy's Executive Council

The Bombay Chronicle, 4 July 1942.

The further expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council has not in the least enthused the country. If it has created any stir it is only in the sense that it has caused deep disappointment at the miserable response to the people's legitimate demands. It has even given cause for concern that it may indefinitely delay a real settlement. Though the number of members of the Council has been increased, the distribution of portfolios is so made that the most important portfolios like Home, Finance and Railways are still monopolized by non-Indians as they were on the outbreak of the war. All that has happened is that a few less important additional portfolios have been created for new Indian members, but the substance of power is still withheld from Indians. The 'Hindu' gently pricks the bubble when it says that the Councillors 'would hardly be able to influence the course of policy because they have not got that popular backing which alone would guarantee such influence.' Even the 'Statesman' candidly admits: 'We need not hope that the new council will rouse political enthusiasm. There will be disappointment that it was not possible to form a more national Government and bring in leaders with more direct power over the country's feelings.' But it is absurd to expect true leaders to accept responsibility without power...

101. 'NO Faith in Any Imperialist Power'; 'Inquilab Is Coming': Frontier Gandhi's Speech

The Sunday Tribune, 5 July 1942.

Peshawar, July 3

Speaking at a big Red Shirt gathering at Babra near Charsadda, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan criticized the British Government for not taking Indians into confidence.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan continued: 'Inquilab is coming. It is like a torrent which sweeps everything before it. No one can foresee the result, but if you have the love of freedom at heart, your actions should be such as would bring the country nearer its goal. I am amused to hear soft words and suave promises. Can we be dulled into forgetting our own ideal and programme? We have no faith in any imperialist Power. We know that freedom will not come to us except through the combined effort of all the Indian people.'

Self Defence

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan emphasized the supreme urgency of the present situation and asked the public throughout India to devote their entire attention to the programme of self-sufficiency and self-defence as laid down by different organizations. Disputes and fratricidal quarrels should be given up and all should unite in making preparations for eventualities. He advised that small bodies of volunteers should be created for each locality in a town, village or hamlet and these volunteers should take energetic steps to carry out their peaceful constructive humanitarian programme.



102. Yusuf Meherally Pledges Support to M.K. Gandhi and Criticizes C. Rajagopalachari's Moves

The Times of India, 6 July 1942.

Madras, July 5

'The true voice of India is the voice of the Congress and today the true voice of the Congress is the voice of Mahatma Gandhi. As a Socialist I pledge support to that lonely voice from Sevagram which will grow in volume and spirit as time goes on. Gandhiji's strength is no strength if the entire nation does not stand solidly behind him', declared Mr. Yusuf Meherally, Mayor of Bombay inaugurating the Madras Nationalist Youths Conference here to-day.

Youths on Trial

They had gathered to-day on the eve of the momentous meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha and the decisions that august body would take might affect the fortunes of the country. When the Congress had decided upon its next forward move, he was sure that the people of India would welcome it with one voice.

Rajaji's Move

Adverting to Mr. Rajagopalachari's latest move, the speaker said that Mr. Rajagopalachari's was a name to be conjured with [*sic*] and it was a household name throughout the length and breadth of the country. The speaker, however, regretted that for some time past, when the political stalemate seemed to have settled down, Mr. Rajagopalachari had placed a new sensational proposal before the country. In spite of the popularity of the man, his move had made no impression whatever on the public life of the country....

103. M.K. Gandhi on Role of AISA and Other Kindred Institutions in the Coming Struggle, Sevagram, 6 July 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 278-9.

The question of the connection with present politics of the members and the staff of the A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A., the Hindustani Talimi Sangh and the kindred institutions was raised at the recent meeting of the A.I.S.A. held in Wardha and is being raised by numerous correspondents. It is better therefore for me to give my opinion in sufficient detail for the guidance of the persons concerned. These institutions, though some are creations of the Congress, are wholly autonomous and unconnected with Congress or other politics.

Their mission is humanitarian, social, educational, economic or all combined. Their work is wholly constructive and creative. But it is true that most men and women in charge of them are Congressmen or Congress-minded, though they are open to all. There are cases of men unconnected with the Congress being found actively engaged in working or aiding them. These institutions must not lose this non-political character of theirs, if they are to retain their prestige, usefulness, and efficiency such as it is.

This is simple enough. But the question raised is complicated. It is clear that the members and the staff may not take part in any civil resistance movement and be still connected with these organizations.

But what are they to do if they see a civil resister belaboured or a general lathi charge takes place in front of them? I say unhesitatingly that the workers in these institutions are bound to render such aid as they can at the moment without considering the consequences. This intervention is itself pure humanitarian work. Persons engaged in these institutions must not be cowards nor may their work be used as a halter round their necks making them useless for service. It is this fear of losing one's job or risking the safety of one's organization that has played a large part in hindering our march to freedom. During the previous struggles all the most scrupulous care to avoid even the remotest suspicion of participation in politics did not save the men and these organizations from the attention of the authorities.

Therefore the golden rule is to dare to do the right at any cost. But there should be no camouflage, no secrecy, no make-believe. Those who feel the urge to take part in the coming movement must resign before joining it. In all other respects the organizations should run their even course. Every moment they are building the temple of liberty and when it is won they will all be required as specialists for the numerous nation-building activities. Let them therefore diligently add to their knowledge and usefulness. During all these twenty-two years the true workers have proved their worth, they are responsible for creating and distributing lacs worth of material and lacs of rupees among lacs of poor men and women who, but for the work provided, would have lived in a state of semi-starvation.

SEVAGRAM, July 6, 1942

104. Letter from S.K. Patil, General Secretary, Bombay PCC, to General Secretary, AICC, 9 July 1942, about Disciplinary Action against Communist Party

AICC Papers, F. No. P-7/1942, NMML.

Re: Disciplinary action against the Communist Party

Dear Friend,

I have addressed you on this subject before now. The problem, however, is getting more acute and unless the Working Committee takes some decision, the consequences are going to be disastrous to the Congress. I am sending you a copy of the new Weekly called 'People's War', started by the Communist Party in four languages, namely, English, Urdu, Hindi and Marathi. The members of this Party have thrown themselves body and soul into the war effort. One can presume that they are getting tons of money from Government to carry on this propaganda. They have got a large paid machinery for this purpose. Every part of this machinery and every bit of their influence which is at present derived from the blessing of Government, is utilized for making Congress members. The Party is so anxious to make Congress members that next to war effort, this has become their pre-occupation.

It is no use asking the P.C.C.s to deal with this menace in their own authority. This is a big all-India problem and must be tackled by the Working Committee. As to their attitude towards the war, the Party has made no secret. At present the Leaders of that Party might not be occupying very many responsible positions in the Congress organization. They are, however, making a bid for these positions, in the near future. The dis-qualification must apply to the intending candidates as well. Please consider this matter very carefully and seriously

and let us know your decision on the subject. We do not want the Congress to be assailed by a combination of Communists and Government.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- (S.K. Patil)
General Secretary

105. Report of Proceedings of CWC Meeting Held at Wardha from
6–14 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, pp. 233–5.

(7-7-42)

In the afternoon the Committee met Gandhi at Sevagram. Gandhi briefly narrated his views on the political situation in the country and his own reactions thereto. He said that detailed views had already been expressed in the *Harijan* which most of the members might have closely followed. He had had further discussions with some of the new Working committee members during the last two months. In his opinion, the Mass Satyagraha including the general strikes of labourers all over the country, social boycott, picketing including war supply and recruitment was the only remedy for the situation. He expressed the fear that if something of the kind was not done, the very existence of the Congress would be in danger owing to inactivity and that other political parties would gain strength and also the support of the Government. Secondly, they would lose the chance to become free from the British yoke ... Nehru wanted any general movement that was started to be final without any midway compromise and implored Mr. Gandhi not to start any fast during the movement as it would lead to the nation's whole attention being diverted to save his life. Nehru further wanted to include the people of the Indian States in the movement ... Maulana Azad expressed his full agreement with the above views of Nehru. Azad however feared breakdown of the morale of the Congress rank and file and the masses if the movement was successfully crushed by the Government repression, which, he apprehended, might be many times more serious than that of 1857. The Maulana wanted that sufficient time should be taken before the movement was started and in the mean time the masses should be fully prepared. Sardar Patel thought that the movement should have followed immediately the departure of Sir Stafford Cripps, and said that it would then have been a befitting reply to the British Government and would have created an impression in other countries that Sir Stafford had seriously bungled matters and had dealt with the Indian situation so irresponsibly that instead of an agreement he had created resistance to British power in India. The Sardar added that the time was past but that it was not yet too late and the sooner the movement was started the better.

(8-7-42)

In the afternoon, the Committee again met at Sevagram to discuss with Mr. Gandhi. Dr. Sayed Mahmood, expressing his full agreement with Gandhi's viewpoint regarding the fundamentals, said that in his opinion, the peasants would whole-heartedly participate in the movement, but he feared that the industrial labourers, more particularly those engaged on war production would not all join it. He also doubted the success of the 'social boycott' item

of the plan as he apprehended that it might lead to feuds in villages that might prove harmful to their cause ... Gandhi promised to send a draft resolution to facilitate further discussion.

(9-7-42)

This morning, the Committee received two draft resolutions from Mr. Gandhi—the one on the problem of evacuation and compensation etc., and the other on general political issue. The Committee considered both the drafts and the main discussion centred only on 'Quit India' draft. Mr. Asaf Ali said that, personally he was against starting any mass civil disobedience movement during the war. He was definitely of the opinion that it would not be successful as the masses would not respond to it, that it would help the Axis powers and that it would antagonize American and other foreigners who had evinced sympathy with India's cause. He advocated the continuance of Congress self-protection and self-sufficiency programme. He however assured Gandhi that once the decision was taken he would support it whole-heartedly, in spite of his differences. Acharya Narendra Deo severely criticized Asaf Ali.

In the afternoon meeting at Sevagram, Asaf Ali, Acharya Narendra Deo and Govind Ballabh Pant expressed their views as reported above. Pt. Nehru also pointed out the reply given by Mr. Amery on the question in the Commons by Mr. Davies, M.P., regarding withdrawal of troops from India, and said that the British ruling class was no doubt adamant but he was sure that pressure from America and China, specially from the former, would greatly influence the British Government, which might be waiting for some suitable opportunity to express itself. Nehru stressed the need for gaining more time which could be done by referring the matter to the A.I.C.C. Gandhi informed the meeting that he contemplated writing to the Viceroy and the United Nations before starting the movement and that he wished to lose no more time.

(10-7-42)

On being asked by Dr. Sayed Mahmood whether his contemplated movement would be started all over the country simultaneously or in some specified areas, Gandhi replied that at present he was thinking of starting the movement in specified areas such as Bardoli in Gujarat, places in Bihar as selected by Rajendra Babu, the U.P. as recommended by Pt. Nehru and in Orissa as proposed by Mira Ben. The remaining members of the Working Committee and the invitees, i.e., Kripalani, Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, Jairam Das Daulatram, Shanker Rao Deo, Dr. Ghosh, Pattabhi Sitarammaya, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Hari Kishan Mahtab said that they agreed with whatever Gandhi decided and so they had not expressed their opinions. Gandhi asked Nehru to prepare amendments which he desired to make in the main draft of 'Quit India' resolution. M. Azad, Nehru, Acharya Narendra Deo, Kripalani and Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammaya were entrusted to draft the amendments.

(11-7-42)

In the morning sitting of the Working Committee, Nehru placed his amendment to Gandhi's draft for consideration. He had altered some portions of Gandhi's remarks on the Cripps' Mission, on Congress attitude to the war as consistent with the doctrine of non-violence and on the international aspect of the war and profession of democracy by Britain. Nehru had also inserted a strong denunciation of all Fascist aggression, assured support to the United Nations, especially Russia and China. His amendment also advocated consideration of the whole thing by the A.I.C.C. meeting. Nehru, speaking on the amendments, said that he had prepared them in consultation with some of his colleagues who had agreed with him and that Dr. Pattabhi and Kripalani had also given their advice, though they did not fully share the views expressed and wished that the original draft of Gandhi should be accepted ...

The Gandhian group, i.e., Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel, Sarojini Naidu, Kripalani, Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammayya, Jairamdas Daulatram, Shanker Rao Deo, Dr. Ghosh and Hari Kishen Mahtab wished that no amendments were necessary and Gandhi's draft should be accepted without any alterations. On Nehru's insistence the amended draft was placed before Gandhi in the afternoon when various members expressed their opinions on it in Gandhi's presence.

(12-7-42)

Discussion again centred on Nehru's amendments to Gandhi's draft. The members wanted to conclude the discussions today as the next day was to be Gandhi's Silence Day. This was however not possible as Gandhi desired to express himself finally before final decision was taken. Gandhi spoke for about three-quarters of an hour in the afternoon and told the members that he would further express his views in the night to Dr. Rajendra Prasad who would relate them to members next morning.

(13-7-42)

Dr. Rajendra Prasad narrated Gandhi's view in the latter's presence. There was nothing in Gandhi's arguments. He generally replied to Nehru's points and stated that he himself desired always to give as much time as possible to the opponent to enable him to come to terms if desired, before starting the movement. But things had made him so agitated that he had no such desire left now. He however found that there was not a great difference between his viewpoint and that of Nehru and Azad regarding the fundamentals, and that he would not oppose any move to take time. Gandhi pointed out the necessity of finishing everything soon and suggested the convening of the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay by the middle of next month. He promised to attend that meeting.

On return from Sevagram, the Working Committee again met at Wardha. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan briefly narrated the alleged repressive policy of the Government in the N.W.F.P. He assured the Committee that Khudai Khidmatgars would whole-heartedly support any programme of mass Civil Disobedience. While the members were hearing Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the meeting room, Maulana Azad, Nehru, Pant, Dr. Syed Mahmood, Jairamdas Daulatram, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad were closeted in Nehru's room. Dr. Prasad said that there was now not any practical difference between the two viewpoints, and that the changes should be made in such a language that might be acceptable to Gandhi-ites and Nehru-Azad group. He placed the corrected draft which he thought would meet Gandhi's approval. Pt. Nehru saw it and further corrected it. The differences were composed.

In the afternoon sitting, the amended draft was placed by Maulana Azad in the hands of Mr. Gandhi. Nehru informed them that he had just received a letter from Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia showing that the authorities were even hampering in collection of facts and figures about complaints regarding war activities in districts of the U.P. Gandhi took the agreed draft and it was decided to meet again the next morning when he might express his views thereon.

(14-7-42)

At the resumed meeting of the Working Committee at Sevagram, Gandhi informed them that he had carefully gone through the amended draft and that he approved it. It was decided to hold the next Working Committee meeting at Bombay on August 4, followed by A.I.C.C. meeting on August 7. Gandhi would, in the meantime, consider detailed programme of the Satyagraha and also the draft letter to be sent to the Viceroy after the A.I.C.C. meeting ... The

original draft contained no appeal but it was a direct resolution to launch mass Satyagraha under Gandhi's leadership and appealed to the nation to successfully participate in it even by sacrificing everything near and dear to them.

Impressions and observations: It is learnt that Gandhi has acceded to Nehru's request and promised not to start any fast unto death. Gandhi is very much agitated and wants that this time the movement should be the final one and he should use every weapon in his armoury of Civil Disobedience, even at the risk of martial law being declared. The social boycott may go to the extent of refusal by physicians to treat soldiers, officers and other persons co-operating with Government.

On pressure being exercised by Nehru and Azad group, Gandhi is said to have agreed to start the new movement all over the country instead of limiting it to specified areas as originally proposed. He also intends this time to include Indian States in his movement as he clearly told to state workers such as Katchru, Kanhaia Lal Vaidya, Krishnamurti (of Madras) and some Jaipur workers who visited him during the Working Committee discussions at Wardha.

Gandhi and Nehru group realize that the Government would get support from the Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Liberals and other non-Congress elements in opposing the Civil Disobedience movement but majority of the Working Committee members believe that non-Congressmen shall have no voice in the country as against anti-British campaign of the Congress. They think that this is the best opportunity for them to start anti-British movement at a time when anti-British feeling had seized the public mind on account of various British reverses in the East and in Africa.

Note—the information is second-hand. The source was not present at the Working Committee meetings but was in touch with one of the members of Working Committee throughout the proceedings. The source's notes were made as a result of his discussion with the Working Committee member. The impressions and observations at the end are entirely the personal opinions of the source.

106. Note from J.B. Kripalani to All PCCs, 8 July 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part II)/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

I am sending you herewith copy of the resolution passed by the Working Committee about enrolment of members and Congress elections.

In response to representations from many provinces the Working Committee has decided to extend the period of enrolment of primary members up to 21st August. There have been no Congress elections for well over two years. In most places Congress Committees that are functioning now were elected as long ago as 1939. The emergency conditions which necessitated postponement of elections still persist but the Working Committee felt that elections now after a lapse of three years and reconstitution of Congress Committees will help to strengthen the Congress organisation and enable us better to meet the crisis that is facing us. You will therefore please take steps to arrange the various elections according to the following time-table.

Last date of enrolment.....31st August

Enrolment roll to be ready for inspection by 15th September.

Submission of objections to the electoral roll to be completed by 30th September.

Disposal of objections by the tribunal to be completed by 10th October.

Delegates election to be completed by 15th October.

Election of the A.I.C.C. to be completed by 25th of October.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

Resolution

Resolved that a general election of the delegates to the Congress which has been postponed for two years be held this year by 31st October 1942. For that purpose the last date of enrolment is 21st August. As soon as the delegates election is completed the delegates should meet in order to elect the A.I.C.C. members from the province. The time table for the various Congress elections will be issued by the General Secretary. Resolved also that the provincial Congress Committees do take necessary steps to arrange new elections of the Sub-ordinate Congress Committees on the basis of the new register.

107. M.K. Gandhi's Draft Resolution for Wardha CWC Meeting,
9 July 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 282-4.

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of the Congressmen that British rule must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating men and their possessions; that is to say not merely in the interests of India, but for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism, Fascism and whatever other 'ism' Japan stands for. Ever since the outbreak of the war the Congress has studiously pursued the policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment carried to its extreme limit would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to the popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It has also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India. These hopes have however been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. It has also been observed that the ill-will against the British is rapidly increasing and people openly wish success to the Japanese arms. The Congress would like to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and turn ill-will into goodwill and make India a willing partner in their trial and troubles. This is possible only if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

The Congress is convinced that the only cure for this intolerable state of affairs is that the British rule in India should end forthwith. The Congress representatives tried their utmost to come to a settlement. But this has been made impossible by reason of the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after

withdrawal of the British power can the wise men and women of the country put their heads together and evolve a scheme whereby a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the Government of India. When the British power is withdrawn the present unreality will give place to reality *and the prince and the peasant will stand on a par*, the present political parties formed chiefly with an eye to the attention of the British power will probably be dissolved. For the first time in India's history realization will come home that Princes, jagirdars, *zamindars*, propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields or factories to whom alone all power and authority must belong. In making the proposal for withdrawal the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War. The proposed withdrawal therefore should not in any way be interpreted as an invitation to Japan or the other members of the Axis to attack India and thus immediately to suffocate China. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. Therefore the Congress would be reconciled, if the Allies regard it to be necessary, to the presence *at their own expense* of their troops in India in order to ward off Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with others.

If the withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it is highly likely that there would be little difficulty in establishing a stable provisional government in India. The Congress however is not unmindful of the possibility of a temporary breakdown of the ordered machinery of the government. Anarchy may set in and instead of different parties coming together for the common good they may compete with one another in establishing their own authority. It is a risk which has got to be run in any country in order to achieve freedom. The Congress therefore wishes to take no hasty step but would bespeak the help of the Allies in securing British acceptance of its demand.

Should however the appeal fail, the Congress will be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920 when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. The struggle this time would have to resolve itself into a mass movement on the widest scale possible involving voluntary strikes, voluntary non-co-operation on the part of all those who are in Government employ or in departments connected with Government in any shape or form and it may involve also non-payment of land revenue and taxes.

For the regulation and quick development of the mass movement the Working Committee authorize Gandhiji to take charge of it and regulate it in the manner he may think advisable. In order that adequate time may be given to the Allied powers to consider and respond to the Congress appeal, as also to elucidate public opinion and to let the A.I.C.C. share the responsibility with the Working Committee for the tremendous step contemplated, the Committee fixes ... for the meeting of the A.I.C.C. at ... until which time the resolution should remain suspended.



108. Jawaharlal Nehru's Confidential Draft Resolution, 10 July 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 386–97.

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of the Congressmen that British rule must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself, and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is necessary not only in the interest of India, but also for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the World War the Congress has studiously pursued the policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its extreme limit, would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to the popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It has also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India. These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way relaxed. This has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against the British and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with great apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably led to a passive acceptance of aggression. Passive and sullen submission to foreign domination today may lead to an equally passive submission to foreign invasion and to the weakening of the spirit of resistance and non-submission among the people. The Congress would like to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and desires to build up this resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any other foreign power. Submission to or passive acceptance of such aggression would mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection possibly for a long period. The Congress is eager to change the present ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in the trials and tribulations of the struggle. This is possible only if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

The Congress is convinced that the only cure for this intolerable state of affairs is that British rule in India should end forthwith. The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to come to a settlement. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the recognition of India's independence can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. With the ending of foreign domination and intervention, the present political parties formed chiefly with the view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom alone all power and authority must belong. With the recognition of India's independence responsible and representative men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional

government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, and later to evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. The first step will have to be a conference between the representatives of free India and the representatives of Great Britain to arrange for the immediate transfer of power and the adjustment of mutual relations, and in particular, for arrangements to be made for the effective defence of India and prevention of any aggression.

In making the proposal for the ending of British rule in India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. It is the Congress will to help in resistance to all aggression and to enable India to do so effectively and with the people's will and united strength behind it. The Congress is therefore agreeable to and is convinced that free India will permit the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. Withdrawal means the handing over of political control in its entirety to the representatives of the people. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India, and in cooperation between this government and the Allied powers in the common tasks of resisting aggression, defending India, and helping China. If there are any risks involved in such a course, they have to be faced in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater peril. Nevertheless, the Congress wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations.

Should however this appeal fail the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at ... on ...

109. B.R. Ambedkar's Statement: 'I Am as Much Opposed to Majority Rule in Hindustan as in Pakistan; Consent of Minorities Must Be Taken'

The Tribune, 11 July 1942.

Bombay, July 10

'What is wrong with the present politicians in India is their conception of majority rule. Just as the minority has no right to veto the decision of the majority, so also the majority has no

right to rule over the minority against its consent,' observed Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member-Designate of the Viceroy's Executive Council in an interview giving his view on Mr.C. Rajagopalachariar's move.

Dr. Ambedkar added: 'I do not mind "Pakistan" being established if we are obliged to bring it into existence, but I object to the plebiscite of whole provinces either through adult suffrage or legislature as a whole.'

He pointed out that just as he was opposed to the majority rule over the minority in the whole of Hindustan and therefore was prepared to concede the 'Pakistan' demand to the Muslim minority, so also he was opposed to the majority rule without the consent of the minority even in 'Pakistan'. He was, therefore, opposed to the plebiscite through adult suffrage or the legislature on the 'Pakistan' issue.

Asked what he would propose as the machinery of consultation Dr. Ambedkar said that his suggestion was that there should be a plebiscite only of the minorities affected.

Explaining his view the Doctor said: 'The conception of majority rule has a particular historic background which must first be understood before we can have a correct conception of the system of the rule by a majority. In the English constitutional law this conception arose out of the jury system. The decision of the jury was never a majority but a unanimous decision. Later on it had a peculiar development in the parliamentary procedure. Whenever the opinion of Parliament had to be assessed the Speaker asked the "Ayes" and "Noes" to go into separate lobbies. But even if the "Ayes" were in a majority he did not declare that the "Ayes" have it. This means the majority decision could not assert itself simply because it was a majority decision against the minorities. The majority members had to approach the minority and persuade them to accept their decision, though they did not think it to be right. Then when the minority consented to abide by the majority decision, even though they did not agree with it then alone the Speaker declared the majority decision as carried.'

'In American constitutional law,' continued Dr. Ambedkar, 'a further stage was reached. There the functions of the Government were divided between fundamentals and non-fundamentals. And it was laid down that on fundamental points the decision of Congress must not be one of pure majority. Only on non-fundamental issues the decision of the majority could assert.'

He added: 'This is the line of thought that must be followed in deciding on "Pakistan". We can discuss Pakistan but the issue being a fundamental one must not be decided by us, outsiders or by India as a whole or even by the majority, who ask for "Pakistan". The minorities affected thereby alone must give the decision. The majority asking for Pakistan has a right to go out of India but they cannot impose their rule on the minorities.'

Asked whether his proposal would create an 'impasse' since the gulf between the majority and the minority could never be thus bridged, Dr. Ambedkar said that he did not feel that difficulty. His proposal discussed in his book on Pakistan was one which could get the majority and minority consent. 'The new provinces,' he said, 'should not be mixed provinces, mixed in point of population, otherwise the communal problem will reappear. The new provinces must be as far as possible ethnically homogenous. By a redistribution of the present population and transfer of them to a certain extent will create the required ethnical homogeneity. My proposal discussed in my book is not cut and dried. It is open to investigation and correction 'Pakistan' conceived on any other line would be surely mischievous.'



110. Circular No. 11 from General Secretary, AICC, to All PCCs,
11 July 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part II)/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

I am sending herewith copy of the resolution passed by the Working committee containing instructions regarding the various problems arising out of Government orders for evacuation of villages, seizures of vehicles etc. The P.C.C.'s should see that these instructions reach all Congress workers and the people in the province. The situation in each district should be carefully studied by local workers and proper guidance given to people in the light of the resolution. The P.C.C.'s should keep themselves fully posted with conditions in the province.

The resolution should be translated in the provincial language and distributed among the people. You will also arrange to send copies of the resolution to all sub-ordinate congress Committees in the province.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

The Resolution

Whereas complaints have been received from various places regarding Government orders for evacuation of villages, lands and buildings without due notice and proper compensation, seizure and destruction of country boats, even where life is impossible without them, requisition of cycles, motor vehicles and carts without proper compensation and without regard for the needs of the civil population.

The Working Committee deem it necessary to issue the following instructions for the guidance of the people concerned and hope that the Government will take immediate and necessary steps to remove the grievances and that the people will carry out their instructions as circumstance demand, provided that in all cases before the final decision to disobey an order or resist any measure is taken, all possible avenues of negotiation and relief through negotiation shall be thoroughly explored.

With regard to evacuation and other orders involving loss, either temporary or permanent of landed property of any kind full compensation should be demanded. In fixing the compensation the factors to be taken into consideration are the value of the land and the crops, the inconvenience and expense likely to be caused to the holder of the land by having to move to another place and the difficulty and delay likely to be involved in obtaining other land where the dispossessed landholder could settle.

Wherever possible arrangement should be made for providing other land to agriculturists where their agricultural land is acquired. Where this is impossible compensation in money should be paid.

Value of trees, water channels, and wells etc. taken over or destroyed should be included in the compensation.

In case of temporary acquisition of agricultural land the full value of the crop plus 15% of it should be paid for each crop lost and when the occupation by Government terminates

compensation should be paid for restoring the land to its previous conditions for agricultural purposes.

Where the bulk of the land of an agriculturist is acquired and the balance left over is so small that it may not be worth cultivating the balance should be acquired.

Houses where acquired should be fully paid for. Where the whole of bulk of the agricultural land of an agriculturist is acquired and only his house is left over, the house should also be acquired by paying full compensation if the agriculturist so desires.

Where a house is to be occupied temporarily for Government purposes fair rent should be paid and the owner compensated for the inconvenience and discomfort caused.

No one should be required to vacate his house without arrangement being made elsewhere for his residence, and full compensation should be paid for transport of the evacuee's belongings and for his maintenance for a reasonable period to enable him to find suitable occupation in his new surroundings.

Compensation should in all cases be paid promptly and on the spot by a responsible officer and not at the headquarters of a District. In case no agreement is reached between the authorities and the evacuee regarding the amount of compensation and the matter has to be referred to a tribunal for decision the amount of compensation proposed by the authorities should be paid forthwith and should not be withheld pending the adjudication of the claim.

There should be no interference with the use of disposal of private property except with the consent of the owner or on payment of adequate compensation.

In case of requisition of boats full compensation should be demanded and no boats should be surrendered till the question of compensation is settled. In areas surrounded by water where boats are indispensable for normal everyday life they should not be surrendered at will.

Fishermen who depend upon their boats for earning their livelihood should be compensated for loss of their employment in addition to the price of their boat.

In case of requisition of cycles, motor vehicles, carts etc. full compensation should be demanded and until the question of compensation is settled they should not be parted with.

In view of scarcity of salt and apprehended famine of it due to war conditions facilities should be provided for collection, preparation and transport of salt on sea coast and in inland areas free of duty by individuals. People may manufacture salt for their own consumption and that of their cattle.

With regard to restrictions on organizations for self-protection the Committee is of opinion that it is the inherent right of all to protect their own life and property and those of their neighbours and therefore all restrictions on them should be disregarded.

111. CWC Meeting: Jawaharlal Nehru Presents Alternative Draft

The Tribune, 11 July 1942.

Wardha, July 10

The Congress Working Committee had a further three hours discussion on the draft resolution presented by Mahatma Gandhi on the present political situation. It is understood that when the Committee met this afternoon, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presented an alternative resolution which defined more clearly the meaning of Mahatma Gandhi's demand for British withdrawal and the stages by which this object is to be achieved.

Discussions, it is understood, centered round the new draft but, according to informed circles, it is doubtful whether Pandit Nehru's draft will be adopted by the Committee but it may be that Mahatma Gandhi himself might accept some of the suggestions contained in Pandit Nehru's draft, particularly the one regarding making the demand for British withdrawal more specific and clearer than has been the case hitherto.

The Committee meets again to-morrow when it is expected that the resolution will be released to the press.

The decision of the Working Committee, it is understood, will take the form of a recommendation to the A.I.C.C. and a meeting of the A.I.C.C. will shortly be convened to ratify the resolution which is now under discussion.

112. M.K. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 13 July 1942, about the War Resolution

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 293-4.

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

I have read the resolution. I note that you have tried to include some of my points. I do not desire any modification. But I do desire that, as far as possible, all of us should interpret the appeal in the same way. It will not be good if we speak in different voices. I stick to the hundred per cent support I gave you in what you said about yourself. I have thought over the matter a great deal and still feel that your capacity for service will increase if you withdraw. And to that extent you will find satisfaction. You may attend the Committee occasionally as I do or as Narendra Dev does. This will ensure your help being available and at the same time your fully retaining your freedom.

This is my plea about Maulana Saheb. I find that the two of us have drifted apart. I do not understand him nor does he understand me. We are drifting apart on the Hindu-Muslim question as well as on other questions. I have also a suspicion that Maulana Saheb does not entirely approve of the proposed action. No one is at fault. We have to face the facts. Therefore I suggest that the Maulana should relinquish Presidentship but remain in the Committee, the Committee should elect an interim President and all should proceed unitedly. This great struggle cannot be conducted properly without unity and without a President who comes forth with a hundred per cent co-operation. Please show this letter to Maulana Saheb. At the moment it is intended for you two only. If you do not like either or both of my suggestions, you may reject them. My motive in writing this is only to help. Whether you approve of it or not, it should not cause any unpleasantness.

The date and venue for the A.I.C.C. have not been indicated in your draft. As far as I am concerned, you are free to issue this appeal to the Press. It is not necessary to come here for a discussion of the resolution. But it has to be as Maulana Saheb orders.

Blessings from

BAPU



113. T.B. Saprū to P. Subbarayan, 13 July 1942, about M.K. Gandhi's 'Dangerous and Short-sighted Line', C. Rajagopalachari's 'Personal Courage and Obvious Sincerity', and Other Related Matters

T.B. Saprū Papers, No. S. 411, Roll No. S 1/5, Microfilm, NMML.

PERSONAL (Camp) Ratlam Kothi, Indore. C.I.

13th July 1942.

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

Your letter of the 4th of July has been redirected to me here. I arrived here on the 8th. I do not think I shall be free from this Rewa case until late in September ...

... The internal situation seems to me to be getting serious. For the life of me I cannot understand what the Mahatma and the Congress Committee mean by reviving Civil Disobedience and declaring that the policy of the Congress is no longer going to be one of non-embarrassment. It is an extremely dangerous and short-sighted line which they are taking. Whatever grievances we may have against the British Government it is most unwise to mix them up with the existing danger from foreign aggression and I should do nothing which might directly or indirectly encourage Japan or Germany, particularly when the situation in Russia and Egypt is one which is causing so much anxiety.

I have been following Rajaji's activities with great interest and admiration for his personal courage and obvious sincerity. His resignation from the membership of the Congress is a first class event and ought to open the eyes of the fanatics in the Congress. That the Hindu-Muslim question has got to be solved admits of no doubt, but it cannot be solved by refusing to solve it. I personally do not at all agree with the demand of Pakistan, and as Cripps himself told me, he had not met a single Mohamedan, including Jinnah, who considered the scheme of Pakistan to be a feasible one. From an academic point of view the principle of self-determination is perfectly sound, but remember the Provinces in India are not like the sovereign States of Australia and remember also the nature of the issue and the consequences of the American Civil War which led Abraham Lincoln to fight the secessionists. The real question to my mind is 'Is Jinnah fighting for the academic recognition of the right of self-determination or is he fighting really for the establishment of two independent sovereign States in India?' If he is fighting for the latter I cannot agree. Not only will his scheme fail on financial and economic grounds but it is full of potential dangers to the safety of India. Nevertheless I should not hesitate to sit round the table and discuss these things with him and his colleagues and it is for this reason that I fail to understand why the Mahatma and the Congress should hesitate to call a joint conference. The worst that can happen will be that there will be no agreement. If so, it will not make the position very much worse than it actually is at present. I do not know what the Government of India may do if Civil Disobedience is started. We are moving in a vicious circle—Civil Disobedience followed by repression, repression

followed by appeasement, appeasement followed by revival of Civil Disobedience. How long are these things to continue?

I have already expressed my views on the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council. I do not think that this expansion is going to alter the situation. I feel convinced that anything great or substantial need not be expected so long as Amery is in power in England and political leadership in India is in the hands in which it is centered at present. I hope you will not mind

my writing to you freely and frankly as this letter is meant only for you and not for publication. Nevertheless I have a sort of feeling that Rajaji may, with the constructive mind which he has, succeed where others have failed. If you meet him give him my best regards and tell him freely that although I have my own views on the question of Pakistan yet I very sincerely admire him for his courage and fine spirit. It would be atrocious for any one to challenge his motives.

With kindest regards,

Yours affectionately,
(sd/. Tej Bahadur Sapru)

114. Final Quit India Resolution Passed by CWC on 14 July 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1(Part II)/1942, NMML.

Events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of the Congressmen that British rule must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is necessary not only in the interest of India, but also for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the World War, the Congress has studiously pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its extreme limit, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to the popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It has also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps' proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against the British and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with great apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any other foreign power.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in the joint enterprise of securing freedom of the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to come to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with the view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom alone all power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule from India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, and later to evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of free India and the representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

In making the proposal for the ending of British rule in India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India and cooperation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realizes that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and, more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights

and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet in Bombay on the 7th of August 1942.

115. Letter from Sri Prakasa to Jawaharlal Nehru, 14 July 1942, about
CWC Meetings

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 96, NMML.

... The papers say that the Working Committee meetings are being prolonged. Mahatmaji was quite weak and almost ill when I left. I believe it is time he took rest. My talks with him told me how strongly he was feeling and how anxious he was that something must be done if the country was to be saved and if advantage was to be taken of the situation, the like of which may not occur again. We might soon be meeting ourselves and then I shall know all about it. The drafting of resolutions is always a difficult matter, and when so many differing shades of opinion have to be adjusted, the matter becomes still more delicate. The final is not yet in the papers but the radio last night said that you were hard at work. I hope you will find a satisfactory solution. I had a talk with Rajaji also before I came away. I felt greatly concerned at his distress and discontent...

116. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to the Press regarding the CWC Resolution
and the Nature of the Movement to Come, 14 July, 1942¹

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 294–8.

To a question whether the Working Committee's resolution met with his approval, Gandhiji said:

It is difficult for me to answer the question. When you are working in a committee you can't have it all your own way. Therefore, you have to compromise. All this has happened in the Committee. If I were an autocrat, undoubtedly the resolution would have been perhaps in somewhat different language. As a matter of fact, the Working Committee has worked on my draft and I must say, too, that the Committee has been most considerate. It was not humanly possible for people, however they may be alike in thought, to agree to the same language. Here the Working Committee tried to accommodate me as much as they could and therefore, I must be entirely satisfied.

Q. Is it possible for you to tell us the things you might do after the All-India Congress Committee meets and adopts the W.C. resolution?

A. Is not that question a little premature? Supposing the A.I.C.C. vetoes the resolution, the whole thing wears a different aspect. But you may know that it will be a mass movement of a strictly nonviolent character and then you can fill in the details. It will include all that a mass movement can include.

Q. Will you include closing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops?

A. It will depend on the circumstances. I don't want rioting as a direct result. If in spite of all precautions rioting does take place, it cannot be helped.

Q. Will you court imprisonment?

A. I am not going to court imprisonment. The struggle does not involve courting imprisonment. It is too soft a thing. We had, no doubt, made it a business to court imprisonment up to now, but there will be no such thing this time. My intention is to make the thing as short and swift as possible.

Q. Will you resort to fasting if sent to jail?

A. It is not my desire this time, as I have said, to court imprisonment. But if I am dragged into jail, it is difficult to say what I may do. But I *can* fast, as I have fasted before now, though I should try to avoid such an extreme step so far as possible.

Q. Do you hope that negotiations may be opened by the British Government?

A. They may, but with whom they will do it I do not know. For it is not a question of placating one party or another. For it is the unconditional withdrawal of the British Power without reference to the wishes of any party that is our demand. The demand is therefore based on its justice. Of course it is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do, it will be a feather in their cap. Then it will cease to be a case for withdrawal. If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognizing the independence of India, without reference to the various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress is this, viz., that there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal. Either they recognize independence or they don't. After that recognition many things can follow. For by that one single act the British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore whenever that great act is performed, on behalf of the British people, it will be a red letter day in the history of India and the world. And, as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of war.

Q. After the recognition of free India it starts to function at once?

A. Yes, from the very next moment. For independence will not be on paper, but in action. But your next legitimate question would be—'How will free India function?' And because there was that knot, I said 'Leave India to God or anarchy'. But in practice what will happen is this—if withdrawal takes place in perfect goodwill, the change will be effected without the slightest disturbance. People would have to come to their own without disturbance. Wise people from among the responsible sections will come together and will evolve a Provisional Government. Then there will be no anarchy, no interruption, and a crowning glory.

Q. Can you visualize the composition of the Provisional Government?

A. I do not need to do so. But I am clear that it won't be a party government. All parties—including the Congress—will automatically dissolve. Of course other parties may come into being afterwards. They may function later and when they do they may function complementary to one another, each looking to the other in order to grow. No party can grow at the expense of another. Then, as I have said, all unreality disappears like mist before the morning sun—we don't know how, though we witness the phenomenon every day.

Q. But looking to all their past record will the British have the sense to come to terms?

A. Why not? They are human beings and I have never discounted the possibility of human nature's upward growth, and no other nation had ever had to face a freedom movement based not principally but wholly on non-violence.

Q. But there is an apparent contradiction in your resolution. The first paragraphs recount the fact that there is no intention on the part of the British to part with power. Then suddenly you postulate such a desire on their part!

A. There is nothing inconsistent. The facts are narrated in order to justify the suddenness of the demand for withdrawal. The other paragraphs refer to possibilities. Many things may happen and they may be altogether creditable to the British.

Q. May not your movement hamper the efforts of the Allies in China?

A. No, since the movement is intended to make common cause with the Allies, it should not hamper the Allied effort.

Q. But if there is no withdrawal, then disturbances are bound to happen?

A. You see ill-will is already there. It will grow apace. Immediately the movement is started, the ill will may be changed into goodwill if the British people respond. But even if they don't respond, when people make an effort to free themselves from a foreign yoke, ill-will needs no other opening. It takes a healthy turn instead of the bad turn that it has today.

Asked if this was the last chance that was being given to the British Government, Gandhiji said:

This is open rebellion of a non-violent character. There is no question of last chance.

Q. But only last week Mr. Amery reminded us that nothing is going to be done?

A. I am very much afraid that we shall have the misfortune to listen to a repetition of that language in stronger terms if possible. But it can't change the will of a group of people who are determined to go their way.

Q. You desire to have India's freedom in order to help the Allies. Will free India carry out total mobilization and adopt methods of total war?

A. That question is legitimate but it is beyond me. I can only say free India will make common cause with the Allies. I cannot say that free India will take part in militarism or choose to go the non-violent way. But I can say without hesitation that if I can turn India to non-violence I will certainly do so. If I succeed in converting 40 crores of people to non-violence, it will be a tremendous thing, a wonderful transformation.

Q. But you won't oppose a militarist effort by civil disobedience?

A. I have no such desire. I cannot oppose free India's will with civil disobedience; it would be wrong.

Harijan, 19-7-1942, and *The Hindu*, 15-7-1942

¹ Mahadev Desai's report of the interview published in *Harijan* under the heading 'The Wardha Interview' has been collated with the report published in *The Hindu*.

117. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to Foreign Correspondents,¹ Wardha, 15 July 1942²
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 298-303.

STUART EMENY: Could you give me an idea of the plans of your movement?

Would it include breach of the Salt Laws, calling out Government servants and labour?

GANDHIJI: As I said yesterday the programme covers every activity of a strictly non-violent character included in a mass movement. Therefore undoubtedly the things you have mentioned are included. But it is not my intention to undertake at once any overwhelming programme. I want to watch and see, because whatever may be said to the contrary, even in conducting the movement I want to guard against a sudden outburst of anarchy or a state of things which may be calculated to invite Japanese aggression. I believe that India's demand is fundamental, it is indispensable for national existence as I conceive it to be. Therefore I shall take every precaution I can to handle the movement gently, but I would not hesitate to go to the extremest limit, if I find that no impression is produced on the British Government or the Allied Powers. I hold it to be legitimate to make the Allied Powers responsible for all that may happen in India, because it is open to them in the interests of the common cause to prevent the happening of anything that might disturb the even course of the war. I think I have sufficiently answered your very pertinent question. I am unable to give you a more detailed answer, not because I want to suppress or shirk it, but I am not ready with a planned programme as yet.

E. It will be your biggest movement?

G. Yes, my biggest movement.

E. But if there is no response, what time limit would you set before launching your campaign?

G. Assuming that the A.I.C.C. confirms the resolution there will be some time—but not very long—taken. As far as I can see just now it may be a week or two.

E. But you will give time?

G. Of course—as I have always done before launching on every struggle.

E. If the Viceroy asks you to go to Delhi, will you accept his invitation?

G. Oh yes. And then you forget that the Viceroy and I have become personal friends, if a public man and a Viceroy may be so called.

E. Will your campaign collapse if Government sent you and thousands of your followers to jail?

G. I hope not, on the contrary it should gain strength if it has any vitality.

E. With the enemy at the gates, what is your objection to calling a truce?

G. This struggle has been conceived in order to avert a catastrophe. At the critical moment an unfree India is likely to become a hindrance rather than a help. The Congress resolution itself hints at the possibility of a large number of Indians going over to the Japanese side—if they effected a landing on the Indian shores—as we now know happened in Burma, Malaya and for aught I know Singapore too. I am of the opinion that this might have been prevented at least so far as Burma is concerned, if she had been made independent. But it was not done. We know the result. We are determined so far as it is humanly possible to secure our independence, so that no Indian worth the name would then think of going over to the Japanese side. It would then become as much India's interest as the Allies' interest to resist Japanese aggression with all her might.

E. But with time so short don't you think you have a moral duty to stand beside the Russians and the Chinese?

G. Don't you see if it was a purely personal question, what you say would have been perfectly possible. But even with the combined influence of every member of the Working Committee, it would have been impossible to enthuse the masses in favour of the Allied cause, which they do not understand, cannot understand.

E. But I have the feeling myself that you could, if you would, with your tremendous authority with the masses, do anything. They are sure to listen to you.

G. You credit me with an influence which I wish I had but, I assure you, I do not possess. And in proof of this I shall give you two solid facts. If I had that influence you will agree that we would already have won our independence without causing any trouble to anybody. But, as you know, I have no influence, nor has the Working Committee with the Muslim League and the Princes. That is one solid fact. Then, there is another thing. During the last War as you perhaps know, I had thrown myself heart and soul into it. I had become a voluntary recruiting agent for the British. And I began my agency in the district in which I had just been leading a campaign for agricultural relief with fair success. I should have made great headway there. But I tell you I did not do so. I used to walk miles in the hot burning sun in order to collect recruits and to make an impression on the people about the urgency of it. But I could not. You will see, therefore, that my influence, great as it may appear to outsiders, is strictly limited. I may have considerable influence to conduct a campaign for redress of popular grievances because people are ready and need a helper. But I have no influence to direct people's energy in a channel in which they have no interest.

STEELE: Then, what part of the people, you think, will believe in your movement?

G. I wish I could tell you definitely. It is all problematical. I simply trade on the absolute purity of the cause and the equal purity of the means which are non-violent.

S. Are you not apprehensive that the Working Committee's resolution will antagonize American opinion?

G. Of course it may. But I have never embarked upon any campaign in the belief that I would have world sympathy at my back. On the contrary, the odds, almost in every case, have been against me. And in the very first satyagraha struggle which started in South Africa, every outward element was hostile to me. I had stated then—though I had no experience of the working of satyagraha that I have now—that a handful though we were in the midst of millions who had no sympathy for us, we had to rely upon our own inner strength and the absolute justice of our cause. And that sustained us through the long-drawn-out agony lasting eight years. I do not know why I should lose the sympathy of the American people, or the British people, for that matter. And why should they fight shy of a just demand for absolute freedom?

S. Speaking as an American, I can say that the reaction of many Americans would be that a movement for freedom may be unwise at this moment for it would lead to complications in India which may be prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of the war.

G. This belief is born of ignorance. What possible internal complication can take place if the British Government declare today that India is absolutely independent? It would be in my opinion the least risk the Allies could take on behalf of the war effort. I am open to conviction. If anybody could convince me that in the midst of war, the British Government cannot declare India free without jeopardizing the war effort, I should like to hear the argument. I have not as yet heard any cogent one.

S. If you were convinced, would you call off the campaign?

G. Of course. My complaint is that all these good critics talk *at* me, swear *at* me, but never condescend to talk *to* me.

RICHARD JEN: You have implicit faith in non-violence. But we have seen that armed resistance alone can succeed against the Japanese.

G. China never tried any experiment in non-violence. That the Chinese remained passive for some time is no proof that it was a non-violent attitude. For the first time in history non-violence instead of being confined to individuals, religious enthusiasts and mystics, has been brought down to the political field and been experimented on by vast masses of mankind. Just imagine, that instead of a few Indians, or even a million or so, all 400,000,000 Indians were non-violent, would Japan make any headway in India, unless they were intent upon exterminating all the four hundred million?

S. If India were made of four hundred million Gandhis.

G. Here we come to brass tacks. That means India is not sufficiently non-violent. If we had been, there would have been no parties, and there would be no Japanese attack. I know non-violence is limited in both numbers and quality, but deficient as it is in both these respects, it has made a great impression and infused life into the people which was absent before. The awakening that showed itself on April 6, 1919, was a matter of surprise to every Indian. I cannot today account for the response we then had from every nook and corner of the country where no public worker had ever been. We had not then gone among the masses, we did not know we could go and speak to them.

R.J. What can free India do for China?

G. If India were to listen to me, she would give non-violent help to China. But I know that will not be. Free India would want to be militarist. She will then get all the material and men she needs—although it appears that China with her vast populations will not need men. Today unfree India cannot send a single person to China. I go further—free India can even plead with Japan and Japan will have to listen.

R.J. Can you give me an idea who would take the lead in forming a Provisional Government—you, Congress, or the Muslim League?

G. The Muslim League certainly can; the Congress can. If everything went right, it would be a combined leadership. No *one* party would take the lead.

R.J. Would it be within the present constitutional structure?

G. The constitution will be dead. The Government of India Act of 1935 *is* dead. The I.C.S. would have to go and it might be anarchy but there *need* be no anarchy, if the British withdraw with goodwill. Free India Government would set up a constitution suited to Indian genius, evolved without dictation from outside. But whether India would be cut up into autonomous provinces or not, I do not know. The permanent structure may take time—all the time the war may require. But the Provisional Government may continue to function. It may be somewhat after the pattern of the present government, but with great modifications. The two communities will certainly work in hearty combination. It would be a combination not superimposed, but brought about by internal effort. The dictating factor will not be an outside one, but wisdom. And I believe there will be abundant wisdom among us.

R.J. Would the Viceroy cease to exist as such?

G. We shall be friends *even* then, but on a par, and I have no doubt that Lord Linlithgow will welcome the day when he will be one of the people.

E. Why can't all this be done today, without the British withdrawal?

G. The answer is simple. Why can't a prisoner do a thing which a free man can do? You may not have been behind prison bars, but I have been and I know. Imprisonment means civil death,

and I suggest to you that the whole of India is civilly dead. The very breath is controlled by British power. Then there is another experience that you lack. You have not been a member of a nation that has been under subjection for several centuries. Our *habit* has been that we can never be free. You know the case of Shri Subhas Bose, a man of great self-sacrifice who might have had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service, but who is now an exile because he cannot possibly tolerate this helpless condition and feels that he must seek the help of Germany and Japan.

Q. You have said there is no more room for negotiation. Does it mean that you would ignore any conciliatory gesture if it was made?

G. So far as we are concerned, we have closed our hearts. As we have said in our resolution all hopes have been dashed to pieces. The burden is shifted. But it is open to America, to Britain, to China and even to Russia to plead for India which is pining for freedom. And if an acceptable proposal is made, it would certainly be opened to the Congress or any other party to entertain and accept it. It would be churlish on our part if we said 'We don't want to talk to anybody and we will by our own strong hearts expel the British.' Then the Congress Committee won't be meeting; there would be no resolutions; and should not be seeing Press representatives.

Harijan, 26-7-1942

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's 'With Three Press Correspondents'. The correspondents were Steele of the *Chicago Daily News*, Stuart Emeny of *The News Chronicle* and Richard Jen of the Central News Agency of China.

² According to Mahadev Desai this interview took place the day following the general Press interview, which was on the 14th; *vide* 'Interview to the Press', 14-7-1942.

118. 'A Friendly Gesture': Editorial about the CWC Resolution

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16 July 1942

The Congress Working Committee's resolution just released is a friendly gesture to Britain and to the other Allied Nations. The gesture is coupled with an earnest exhortation to the British Government to realize the gravity of the Indian situation and make a response worthy of the cause which the United Nations and their leaders profess to hold so dear. The resolution seeks to explain, in clear and unambiguous terms, the position of the Congress and thereby to remove the confusion that may have been caused in India and abroad by certain recent writings and statements of Mahatma Gandhi. First, it points out, contrary to the interpretation of the Congress stand sought to be given Sir Stafford Cripps, that there is no internal conflict in the Congress leadership as to the issue of violence 'versus' non-violence as a measure of effective resistance to any invader. Whatever Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy propounded from time to time on this issue, he has agreed, provided there is adequate response to the Congress Working Committee's gesture from appropriate quarters, to the continuance of armed defence against the aggressor and to the mobilization of the country's moral and material resources to that end. It is hoped that responsible men like Sir Stafford Cripps will now refrain from telling the world that the internal controversy as regards Gandhiji's cult was responsible for the breakdown of the Lord Privy Seal's negotiations with Congress leaders.

Secondly, the resolution makes it clear that Gandhiji's demand for the withdrawal of British power reiterated in the Working Committee's decision, negatively, does not amount

to a demand for the withdrawal of British, American or other troops or a notice to quit to those members of the British community who would make India their home and live here as citizens on a footing of equality with others. It is a demand, affirmatively, for the orderly and peaceful transference of political power from Britain's ruling classes to the children of the soil or their accredited representatives. It is intended to give the Indian people a sense of human dignity as well as to strengthen the impulse of resistance to those sinister forces which have produced this worldwide conflagration. It is intended further to co-ordinate armed resistance in the battlefield with the moral strategy of the nation in the rear and thus to render the Indian sector of the Allied Nations' front invulnerable to the Axis penetration.

Thirdly, the resolution gives proof, if proof were still needed, that the Congress's sympathies are entirely with the Allied Nations, especially China at this hour of grave peril, and that the Congress is determined to make its contribution to a crushing blow to the Axis Powers. The Congress cannot, however, shut its eyes to the grim realities of the situation. British policy in India and the failure of the Cripps negotiations have resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against Britain and a dangerously growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. This is a development which the Congress views with grave alarm and apprehension. For, unless checked, it is bound to lead to passive acceptance of aggression and further moral degradation of the Indian people. The Congress undertakes to change the present ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing and enthusiastic partner in a joint enterprise with the Allied Powers for human liberation. The change this envisaged cannot be brought about except in conditions of internal freedom from British domination and hence the demand for the withdrawal of British political power. Apart from the repercussions of foreign domination on the Allied Grand Strategy in this war, the Congress Working Committee is definitely of the opinion that it has given rise to problems internally which cannot be effectively tackled unless there is a change in the seat of power and the manner of its exercise. Once this domination is eliminated and things are seen in their true perspective the realization will come home to the artificially manipulated parties in India and the existing vested interests that it is the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom they will have ultimately to look for guidance and sanction. For to these workers the power and authority must essentially belong. This transference of political power which the Working Committee's resolution contemplates would go a long way towards solving the communal problem also.

Fourthly, the Working Committee proceeds to give a concrete picture of the shape of things to come upon the withdrawal of British rule in India. Responsible men and women of the country will then come together to form a Provisional Government, representative of all important sections of the Indian people. That Government, it is suggested, will take in its hands the direction and control of India's war policy in collaboration with the Allied Nations during the pendency of this conflict. It will later evolve a scheme by which a Constituent Assembly may be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Their representatives of Free India and representatives of Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations as allies in the common task of social and economic reconstruction. Finally, the Working Committee's resolution ends upon a note of solemn warning that should their earnest and friendly appeal to Britain fail to evoke the response it deserves the Congress would be compelled reluctantly to take measures under Gandhiji's leadership for vindicating the political rights and liberty, for strengthening the people's united will to resist aggression and for saving India and the larger cause of freedom of the human race from far greater risks and perils.

There is no desire to embarrass the British Government or the other Allied Nations in this prosecution of the war or in any way to encourage aggression in India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other Power associated with the Axis group. There is, again, absolutely no intention to jeopardize or undermine the defensive capacity of the United Nations. The Working Committee has further made it clear that impatient as it naturally is to achieve national freedom, it would take no hasty step and avoid, as far as possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The resolution is in no sense an ultimatum. It is, on the contrary, an appeal addressed to Britain in particular and to the other Allied Nations generally. It is a sincere offer of help and co-operation by a joint effort to make the world safe for freedom and democracy to which the Allied Nations and their spokesmen proclaim their adherence. There is no room any longer for confusion, doubt or suspicion. It is now for Mr. Churchill and the leaders of our gallant Allies in America, China and Russia to grasp this hand of co-operation with sincerity and enthusiasm and without a moment's delay or hesitation or else they will have to accept the grave responsibility for tragic and disastrous happenings in this very important and vital sector of the world's democratic Front.

119. The Working Committee's Demand: Editorial

The Tribune, 16 July 1942.

The first thing that will strike any dispassionate reader of the Wardha telegrams with regard to the Congress Working Committee's resolution demanding the withdrawal of the British Power from India is the substantial discrepancy between the interpretation put upon it by Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and the Congress President on the other. While Mahatma Gandhi describes it as an act of 'open rebellion' on the part of the Congress, the Congress President would not call it even an 'ultimatum'. To him it is only 'an appeal and a warning.' Our own reading of the resolution is that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's interpretation of the resolution, which is obviously a compromise between two opposing points of view, is nearer the truth than the Mahatma's. The idea of an open rebellion, of course, in the Gandhian sense of the expression, that of a rebellion carried on with the weapon of pure non-violence, may have been predominant in the Mahatma's own mind, but the resolution itself is far more truly a reiteration of the old Congress demand for the immediate establishment of a National Government in India, coupled with a warning as to what would happen if the demand were not satisfied....

120. Extracts from a Note of an Interview That Mirabeen Had with the PS to the Viceroy on 17 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *The Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (The Wickenden Report)*, pp. 238-40.

Mira Ben said that she would like to feel that the Viceroy had some true idea of the situation before too much poison was spread about—in Mr. Gandhi's own words: 'Poison will be rampant'. He gave her no messages for the Viceroy, but had opened out his whole heart to her before she left and put her in touch with his feeling during these past few weeks ... Unless matters were so handled there was nothing ahead but a very bad crash ... Mira Ben said that Gandhi was doing what he was doing in the fullness of his sense of friendship for the English. The gesture of friendship was strongest, in his heart, and his solution was the only way to

save the situation. A drastic and terrible cure would have to be taken in hand for England and for India, because, though we did not know it, this country was slipping out of the control of Great Britain. Up to 6 or 8 months ago there had been strong anti-British feelings throughout the country but nothing more than that. Now the feeling of the masses was (in her own phrase) pro-anything—anti-British to a degree that we could not believe. They would wish to garland the Japanese and the Congress could not stop them because they had been so tortured by the present Government ... The non-Congress elements in the country hated the British in a manner that could not be controlled unless the Congress gave them Swaraj. It was difficult for me to realize the loathing entertained in this country for the British ... Mira Ben begged that we should now make one final bid for saving the situation.... We were sitting on an unexploded bomb without realizing it. Congress on the other hand *did* realize what the position was, and did not want the bomb to explode, since its explosion would shake the whole world ... I said that I could not help being somewhat shocked by the ease with which Mr. Gandhi spoke of throwing India into chaos and anarchy. Mira Ben then said that another consideration that had weighted with Gandhi was a still more vital thing—the fact that the country had in his judgment sunk to such a depth of moral weakness, and was so humiliated, that its population was in such a state of slavery that they were prepared to criticize the British Government at every turn and at the same time to lick its boots, though they knew how they hated it. Better die than live in that degraded state.... After some further sparring she said that she had in conclusion a very terrible observation to make, but one which it was necessary that the Viceroy should realize. If the worst came, if we felt obliged to force matters to a crisis, let us remember that we had to deal with a man whom we should not be able to imprison. We might intern him or put him in jail. He would not stay there, by which she meant that in this movement Gandhi visualized that there should be no jail-going for anyone. In the last civil disobedience movement though sent to jail Congress followers had behaved well there. They had been non-violent. But on this occasion they would not follow the rules of the jail. It would be a case of Swaraj or death. We should have to take on more than we had ever tried to cope with before once a movement began inspired by that idea. The more we tried to suppress Gandhi the greater power would become. We could either join hands with Gandhi and say ‘Come let us try and find out a way’. He would in those circumstances help us though there could be no compromise. He could explain as no one else can. Or we could fight him to the point of death; and ruin, in those circumstances, any hope of friendship between England and India.... We must without doubt either come to the point of according independence to India or kill Gandhi. If we kill him, India, would not kill us; but it would be impossible for us to stay in India. We did not know the force of the spirit in him and what it meant to the mass of the people. Let us think seriously. She was making no threat but was only trying to help us to see the tragedy with which we were faced ... To let this matter come to a crisis would be the most dangerous step ever taken by the British Government in India. We did not know the forces latent in the country. Indeed Congress itself did not know those forces. But Mira Ben knew the spiritual power lying hidden—power of the spirit never calculated on by governments and administrations, very difficult for them to realize. No other leader could cope; once Gandhi casts his all into the battle, it was finished.... He was absolutely in earnest. He would do his utmost not to have to take these steps, but if he did it will be for our good. He would do his utmost to endeavour to keep the movement non-violent but even if there be violence here or there he would not on this occasion withdraw the movement, because he says that it would

be a greater violence for him to try to withhold his hand and let the country go the way it is at present going than to risk the violent that may take place. He had said: 'I must not hold my hand', he would do all in his power to guide the movement on non-violent lines, but he must be left free to guide the movement. If he was not left to guide it by word or writing there was nothing left for him but death.

121. From General Secretary, Andhra PCC, to General Secretary, AICC, 18 July 1942, about Communists in Congress Committees
AICC Papers, F. No. P-3/1942-7, NMML.

Sir,

A number of detenus have been recently released from jails and are carrying on open propaganda for unconditional support to War effort. Some of them happen to be members of elective Congress Committees. Kindly enlighten us whether they can be removed from their places or whether they should be allowed to continue.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

General Secretary

122. Reply from Sadik Ali, Office Secretary, AICC, 24 July 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-3/1942-7, NMML.

Dear friend,

We have your letter of the 18th inst. It is certainly open to the Provincial Congress Committees to take disciplinary action against those who carry on propaganda contrary to the Congress policy and programme....

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Office Secretary

123. Maulana Azad's Meeting with Congress, Ahrar, and Jamiat Workers in Delhi, 17 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, p. 237.

45. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad met about 100 prominent Delhi Congressmen, including about 30 Jamiat and Ahrar workers and a few Congressmen from the rural areas of Shahdara, Narela, Mehrauli and Najafgarh, at the residence of Asaf Ali on the evening of the 17th July, 1942. The meeting, it is believed was arranged at the request of the Congress President himself.

Explaining the implications of the Wardha resolution, Maulana Azad said that British Imperialism was now so weak that it only required a single blow to destroy it. The Axis Powers were overwhelmingly powerful and the United Nations, particularly the British, were hardly in a position to defend India effectively. The Allied nations were incapable of launching any

offensive at the movement, and it was becoming increasingly clear that the British could not withstand German pressure for much longer. At the same time, Azad continued, he and other Congress leaders were convinced that, if the Axis overpowered India, Indians would be much worse off than at present. There was, therefore, no question of inviting any of the Axis powers to India but if Indians could receive a satisfactory assurance of freedom, they would risk seeking Japanese help. The whole question had been very carefully considered and the conclusion reached was that a mere change of masters would do Indians no good, but at the same time the risk had to be faced and the British Government fought in the interests of India's freedom.

The following questions were put to Abul Kalam Azad and he answered them as below:

Q. Will Gandhi call off the movement if the Chauri Chaura incident is repeated?

A. We on our part will do nothing to encourage or promote violence in any shape or form, but we will not be responsible for the masses who may turn violent.

Q. Will the movement involve strikes on Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, and War Production Centres, etc.?

A. Everything that will go to help the movement will be adopted.

124. Maulana Azad Explains the CWC Resolution

The Hindustan Times, 18 July 1942.

New Delhi, Friday.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President, in an interview to the United Press on Thursday evening emphasized that the Congress had been wedded to three fundamental principles, sympathy for the Democracies, policy of non-embarrassment to the war effort and the will to resist any aggression, and in the resolution passed at Wardha the Congress had firmly adhered to those principles. The whole spirit of the resolution was one of presenting the case for India's demand which was dictated by the political situation in the country.

Whether any movement is to be started immediately, Maulana Azad said, would depend on certain developments. He said that the main anxiety of the Congress at this hour was due to the fact that the defence of the country could never be organized to an effective and efficient degree unless the people could be made to think that their stake was involved in the war, which was to be fought in their own interest.

The Congress President added that the Congress would not be satisfied with anything but the immediate declaration of independence and handing over of power to Indians. When the British Government made it perfectly clear that they were prepared to part with power and make India free, it would be easier for political parties in India to make adjustments and form a Provisional Government, pending such time when a Constituent Assembly could agree upon the final settlement ... the British might turn to the Congress or the League to accept the responsibility, and the Congress and the League, Maulana Azad was sure, would consult each other to form a Government. Maulana Azad went to the length of saying that he would not be sorry if the Congress were left out and the Muslim League were given the power to form the Government, but the only condition precedent would be the declaration of independence of India.

In reply to the question what he thought would be the attitude of the Muslim masses in the event of a civil disobedience movement by the Congress, Maulana Azad said that the

Congressite Muslims would stand by the movement and there was no reason to believe that the Muslim League would stand against that. In any case they would not interfere in any movement started by the Congress.

The Congress President said that for the first time in the history of the Congress, a resolution was in actuality addressed not only to the British Government but to the United Nations. The United States of America, the Congress President continued, had become the main hope of the Democracies today and he expected the right gesture would come from America.

125. Jawaharlal Nehru's Meeting with Delhi Congress Workers, 18 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, pp. 240–1.

Pandit Nehru addressed a meeting of Delhi Congress workers at the New Delhi War Congress Committee office near the Hotel Marina on the 18th instant. His attempted elucidation of the Wardha resolution gave an observer the impression that the Pandit was trying to convey that the British hold on India, particularly in the rural areas, had weakened and was growing weaker. The Congress had, therefore, decided to make a supreme effort to capture power beginning from the villages. Nehru considered the loss of fifty lac lives as not too great a price to pay for independence. In his opinion there was now great unrest and political discontent in the country, and, before peace and freedom could dawn, India would have to pass through a period of crisis, perhaps a revolution.

126. 'We Are Passing through a Stormy Period': Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech in Delhi, 18 July 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 409–12.

Many times you have assembled here and I too have had many opportunities of addressing you here. But today I am faced with a difficulty. You must be acquainted with the latest statements of Mahatmaji. The events of today, taking place in the world and in India, are really very important. You must have heard of them and read about them in the newspapers and you know where you stand. We in India are passing through a stormy period. I do not know, and nobody can know, its consequences. A gigantic war is going on which is approaching India day by day. The problems which have become difficult are those which concern us primarily and which are our national problems. These problems we can face only when we make ourselves strong.

You are aware of the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha. You must have also read the articles written earlier by Mahatma Gandhi in the *Harijan* and realized which way the wind is blowing. The resolution passed by the Working Committee is not decisive, but evidently it is a vital decision. The final decision will be taken by the All India Congress Committee which will meet in a week or two at Bombay.

What is going to happen afterwards, I cannot say. Everything depends on the decision to be taken by the A.I.C.C. Whatever be this decision, we can only guess that it would be important and final.

The character of war has radically changed, and the fate of India can no longer be decided as in the past by a single defeat at Panipat. Wars can only be carried on in the modern world with the sanction of the people. We want to create a spirit in India which will make people fight

for every inch of ground and not be dismayed by a single military defeat. You are all aware of the glorious fight which the people of China are crying on for the last five years. I deprecate the policy of inaction which will bring about our spiritual degradation. To surrender without a fight kills a country's soul.

The Congress has always strived to solve the problem of communal question but the British Government obstructed its solution in their own interest. Sir Stafford Cripps also tried to introduce an apple of discord.

I am confident that there will be no great difficulty in establishing a government representing Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities.

As regards the coming struggle it is no longer a question of going to jail. Nobody will deliberately go to jail. It will be a terrible ordeal for the Congress this time. It may perish in the struggle but a free India will emerge out of its ashes. I am not dismayed at such a prospect.

Many people are saying that Congress leaders are only working for themselves or for their party and are trying to establish their dictatorship over the people of India and it is alleged that the Congress is a communal organisation.¹ Such a thing to my mind, is unthinkable in the present world. The Congress believes in the willing cooperation of all sections of the people.

It is difficult to predict the future. War may come to India but our struggle cannot end till India is free. Whatever is in my mind is also in yours. The present War will not lead the countries to real freedom. I do not wish victory for Japan or Hitler lest the world should be enslaved. I am however surprised at the British attitude which is so boastful of her love for freedom. There is no change in her attitude despite her defeats in the battlefields. After the Working Committee resolution it has again started threatening and advising us. I am fed up with their sick advice from Whitehall and the threats and intimidations against us. Our only reply to their threats is to oppose them.

People are clamouring for action since long. Hitler devastated the countries conquered by him and their plight has become all the more miserable after the German occupation. After two hundred years of sufferings and hardships it is not proper to postpone the struggle for freedom whatever be the circumstances. This people tend to forget. Also, the struggle for India's freedom is a fight for the freedom of the world.

I see two things. First, the attitude of the British Government within its Empire. Secondly, its refusal to grant Dominion Status to Burma even after the War. Within a few months Burma had changed hands and had been snatched away from the British. The Governor of Burma talks funny things without being ashamed of them at all. The behaviour of the British Government and its officers in Burma was scarcely creditable. The British officers of Burma are now being appointed as high officials in Delhi. They had given ample proof of their ability in Burma and now opportunities are being afforded to them to show their worth in India. Is it not strange? Leave aside the question of sympathy with India. Had they only exercised a little commonsense and prudence, the situation would have been entirely different. But they are so conservative that they have not changed their mentality in spite of a change the world over. They are aware of what happened in Malaya and Burma, and they must be imagining what would happen if their rule in India also came to an end. But apparently they do not seem to be disturbed. They tread the same old beaten track, but we can no longer allow our country to be on the path of destruction as witnessed in Burma and Malaya. Mahatma Gandhi has written a number of strongly worded articles within the last two months, and has asked the British to quit India at once. It is a bitter pill for them to swallow. But Mahatma Gandhi agreed to let the British and

American armies remain on the Indian frontiers to fight the Japanese on the condition that India is declared independent and armies fight on behalf of a free India against the enemy.

Mahatma Gandhi whose mission of life is to free India has now reached the age of seventy-three. He has fought several times the fight of freedom. He is old now although full of courage. He wants to fulfil the mission of his life.

We want to check the dangerous turn which the anti-British feeling in India is taking. In the opinion of Gandhiji the only method to do it is to create a spirit of non-submission against foreign domination of Britain or Japan. We do not want to go from the frying pan into the fire.

There has been some criticism of the Working Committee's resolution in the American press but we will strain every nerve to explain our resolution and its implications. It is my strong belief that the stand which the Congress has taken is in the interest of the Allies. I have every hope that those friends of ours who feel bewildered at our resolution will before long correctly appreciate our position and sympathize with us. I do not want to condemn such misinformed critics.

India is now determined to take a dip in this worldwide storm. In a few weeks we will have a mass movement. This will be our final struggle and we must be prepared to face the worst.

¹ On 14 July Jinnah had declared that the congress, by rejecting Rajagopalachari's resolution on Pakistan had 'declared itself definitely and emphatically for Akhand Hindustan.' For full text of Jinnah's speech see section on Congress and the Communal Problem.

127. G.B. Pant Convenes Secret Meeting of Important Congress Workers of Kanpur, 19 July 1942

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, pp. 241-2.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was in Cawnpore on the evening of 19-7-42 when he secretly convened a meeting of the important Congress workers about 15 in all. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant explained to the workers present as follows:

There are these days three groups of different ideologies in the Working Committee of the A.I.C.C.

- (1) The Group of Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sarojini Naidu.
- (2) The Group of Asaf Ali of Delhi, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Bhulabhai Desai and Rajagopalachari, who, although now not a member of the Working Committee, is with this group.
- (3) The Group of Vallabhbhai Patel, Govind Ballabh Pant, Mr. Ghosh of Bengal, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Jairam Das (Daulat Ram), Shanker Rao, Pattabhi (Sitarammayya) and Babu Rajendra Prasad.

The first group is of the opinion that they should play for time and not start any mass movement immediately. They consider that the reactions in Russia are merely temporary and that within fifteen days the Russians will be in a position to regain strength sufficiently to repulse the Germans. As regards Japan they believe that due to abundant rain in Assam and East Bengal and Orissa, Japan turns for the time being towards China. During these days when Russia and China are in weak state in the war they are not in a position to divert their attention towards the Indian affairs but when they will regain power they are sure to take up the question of India with the British government and therefore time is needed. If the Congress

start any movement at this juncture they will lost the sympathy of Russia and China as well as of America.

The second group holds that no movement at all should be started because if they will do anything the Government will adopt a strong repressive policy and at the same time there will be an anarchy in the country.

The third group is entirely under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and along with him are of the opinion that a mass movement must be started, and should be started by the 15th of September. Mahatma Gandhi intends to give the ultimatum to the Government just after the Bombay sitting of the A.I.C.C. is over. The sitting will begin from the 7th of August and will be over by the 10th of August after which date Mahatma Gandhi will give one month's notice in his ultimatum.

The movement will be in the shape of a general strike of every kind except of conveyances. The movement may even include a no-rent campaign. In this movement there will not be any individual act but whatever act will be done, will be done by the masses. Strikes will be in general form in all the mills, factories, telegraph offices, post offices, Electric and Water Works, etc. Every kind of mischief like the cutting of wires, demolition of bridges, etc., will be committed. It is not yet decided from which place the movement will begin. Mahatma Gandhi's conception in starting this movement is that Government will be paralysed, meaning thereby there will be an open rebellion.

128. Worst Charge Made against the CWC: It Is an Attempt to Establish Congress Dictatorship or Hindu Raj

The Tribune, 21 July 1942.

Of all the charges that have so far been made by a class of critics against the Congress Working Committee's resolution demanding the withdrawal of British rule from India the worst is the charge that it is an open and undisguised attempt to establish Congress dictatorship or Hindu *Raj* in India, which to the critics are synonymous terms. That the two things are not synonymous is unmistakably clear from the fact that the resolution has been condemned with the same vehemence by the Hindu Mahasabha as by the leaders of the Muslim League. In reality there is as little truth in the accusation that the resolution aims at the establishment of a Congress dictatorship as in the accusation that it aims at the establishment of a Hindu *Raj*. In both cases the charge betrays either the height of ignorance or the height of perversity.

The two sources from which the charge had so far emanated are British and American newspapers who either did not know the truth or had a vested interest in the perversion, and the leaders of the Muslim League, the sworn enemy of the Congress which it has during the last few years taken a peculiar delight in maligning as a purely Hindu organization. In both cases the Congress has treated it with indifference, if with contempt first because it is of a piece with the stuff to which it has been accustomed all these years from the same quarters, and secondly because dispassionate opinion can have no difficulty in distinguishing informed and honest criticism from partisan pronouncements bearing as their face unmistakable marks of ignorance or malice....



129. Ambedkar Takes Charge of Labour Portfolio in Viceroy's Executive Council

The Bombay Chronicle, 21 July 1942.

Dr. Ambedkar this morning telegraphically took over charge of the Labour Portfolio in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

130. K.M. Munshi's Statement: 'Quit India' Campaign Is Voice of Indian Nationalism

The Tribune, 22 July 1942.

Bombay, July 21

Mr. K.M. Munshi, ex-Minister, has issued the following statement:

'Whatever view is taken of the latest action of the Working Committee in deciding upon a non-violent revolt, such action was neither unnatural nor unexpected; except, of course, to those who have congenital incapacity to understand the human mind in general and the Indian mind in particular.

'In 1939, November, a little before the Congress resigned offices in the provinces, it offered its willingness to remain in office and fight the war, if given a share in the existing Central Executive. But, secure in its insular conceit of invincibility, Britain never so much as even looked at the offer.

'In 1940, May, France fell. India was stirred to its depths; it was ready to shoulder the responsibility of war, if some form of National Government was given in the Centre, more or less, within the framework of the Constitution Act. But by then Britain felt that it had a trump card in its hands. The Muslim League had been encouraged to obstruct constitutional progress. The impossible formula of "I divide, but if you unite, you shall have freedom" had been invented to thwart India and pacify restive world opinion. The desire to fight the war was then smothered by the 'August offer of Britain'.

In the beginning of 1942, after Malaya had fallen and Rangoon had been lost to Britain, the Indian National Congress agreed to lower its flag of Independence, jettison its architect and mentor, Mahatmaji, and join other parties in forming the Executive Council. If only the Viceregal veto was held in abeyance by convention. But this suggestion was spurned. Britain found herself the trustee of every body in the country as against the Indian nation.

During all this time Britain was fostering ideas of disruption, believing that to do so was to Britain's advantage. Its apostles were constituted arbiters of our present and future, by reiterated pronouncements. Even under the Cripps proposals, disruption was invested with the halo of a sacred principle. This seed was deliberately sown.

India in future will have to reap a harvest of civil war and chaos. On the top of it all, for the last nearly three years now, India, for its desire all to participate in the war, has had to listen to the insolence of Mr. Amery.

Voice of Indian Nationalism

India would be less than human if the patience of its great national organization had not creaked under such strain. The 'Quit India' campaign therefore, is the voice of Indian nationalism, seeking to save its soul at all costs in a situation solely created by British statesmanship....

No Longer 'Fluid'

'Indian opinion, which was overwhelmingly pro-British before the Crippsian negotiations, has undergone a devastating change since then. It is no longer fluid. It is not pro-British. The Amerys of Britain have created the impression that India should expect no future other than unredeemed promises, unchanging bondage and unending colour discrimination....

131. Circular No. 13 from General Secretary, AICC, to All PCCs,
22 July 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

The next meeting of the A.I.C.C., will be held in Bombay on August 7, 1942 and subsequent days. As the issues to be considered and decided upon by the meeting are of vital importance for the people of the country I am advised by the Congress president to invite the Presidents and Secretaries of the P.C.C.s who are not already members of the A.I.C. C. to attend the meeting. I am therefore inviting you and the President of your Committee to attend the Bombay meeting of the A.I.C.C. The necessary invitation cards to enable you to attend the meeting will be issued by the A.I.C.C. Camp office which will be opened at Bombay from 4th August 1942.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

132. B. Shiva Rao to T.B. Saprú, 23 July 1942, about the Likely Effects of
M.K. Gandhi's Call for Quit India

Correspondence with T.B. Saprú, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML.

.... Important developments are expected as a result of the Congress Working Committee's decision. There is no doubt that American and British opinion has been alienated to a considerable extent by the resolution. What is even more unfortunate is that Jawaharlal, when he was in Delhi last week, seemed to have given the Americans the impression that there can be no compromise and no negotiations. I am told that the Executive Committee discussed the situation and came tentatively to the conclusion that for the present no repressive action need be taken. At the same time I am told that no time will be lost the moment the AICC endorses the resolution of the Working Committee.

There are various reports afloat in Delhi. One is that Halifax may come out to India to renew the negotiations. Personally I doubt very much whether Churchill will do it... I have also pointed out that it is unwise to make it appear that only the Congress and the Muslim League are entitled to the Cripps proposals in full, but that other parties, even if they are willing to co-operate, must be content with small concessions like this second expansion.

I do not personally agree with those here who take the view that Gandhi will not be able to do much harm. According to reports current in Bombay, he is planning a general strike aimed particularly at paralyzing transport like railways and also dockyards and harbours. Having had something to do with labour in the past, I feel that he will have a sufficient response in certain centres, at any rate, to make the demonstration effective. Undoubtedly there will be clashes

with the police and possibly with Muslims. There may even be communal riots in many parts of India. But it seems Gandhi will not be deterred by such developments.

I cannot help feeling that internal commotion on a large scale and at this juncture will be disastrous both in India and to the allied cause. The Russian situation is grave beyond words. Japan is holding back her hand for certain reasons, but may strike in September or October. Nothing less than a total and wholehearted effort by India will be of any use in these circumstances. It will do no good in my opinion to apportion blame between the different elements whether Indian or British. The British Cabinet must act immediately and implement in full the Cripps scheme. I see no reason why the Viceroy or the Secretary of State should not, in making this announcement, add that the Viceroy will to the utmost extent possible deal with the Executive Committee on a basis of collective responsibility and revise the rules of business so as to liberalise the administration. If the Congress and the League come in, so much the better and otherwise let the other parties be given an opportunity of co-operating on this basis.

133. 'Get Ready for Mahatma Gandhi's Call'; 'I Hope N.W.F.P. Will Be in Vanguard of Struggle': Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Speech

The Tribune, 23 July 1942.

Charsadda, July 22

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan disclosed at the meeting of the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee that he had written a letter to His Excellency the Governor of the Frontier province yesterday, explaining the restrictions on Khudai Khidmatgars going to tribal area for the propagation of the Congress self-protection programme. He had stated therein that the purpose of the mission of the Khudai Khidmatgars was only to advise the tribes not to harass the people in the settled districts by raids, looting etc. in any emergency. He had requested the Governor not to place obstacles in the way of the Khudai Khidmatgars when all of them proceed to the tribal territory for the task. 'Our work cannot be stopped and we are determined to carry it out,' emphasised the Khan.

The Coming Struggle

A call to the people to make preparations for the coming struggle for India's independence was made by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, addressing the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee.

'The trend of the British comments on the Congress resolution,' he said, 'indicated that Britain is not willing to accept our advice.'

The Khan declared that the Congress Working Committee had arrived at their decision unanimously and they all realized that there was no other way left but to launch a mass struggle through India for the vindication of other political rights and freedom.

'If the British accept our proposal (which is made in their and our own interest) and come to some settlement with us,' the Khan said, 'India would directly become equal to all of the United Nations and would resist the aggressor with all its resources.'

Concluding Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan said 'you should get ready for Mahatma Gandhi's call which I expect any moment after the ratification of the Congress Working Committee's resolution. I hope that the frontier province as usual will be in the vanguard of this struggle.'

The F.P.C.C. then met in camera and concluded its deliberations late at night.

A public meeting was held tonight at which Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan also spoke.

134. T.B. Saprū to P. Subbarayan, 25 July 1942, about M.K. Gandhi
Gambling with the Safety of the Country

T.B. Saprū Papers, No. S. 412, Roll No. S 1/5, Microfilm, NMML.

(Camp) Ratlam Kothi, Indore, C.I.

25th July 1942.138

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

I was shocked to read yesterday in one of the papers here that your elder son, whom I know, is reported to be missing and is probably a prisoner of the war ... He has my best wishes for his return and you and Mrs. Subbarayan may be sure that you have the best wishes of your friends including my humble-self.

I have been here for the last three weeks ... The work is very heavy as I have to be busy from 7 o'clock in the morning till 9 in the evening. From such newspapers as I get here I find the internal situation is getting more and more complicated. I do not know what is in store for us. What an evil fate is pursuing us! I cannot imagine any man gambling with the safety of his country as the Mahatma is doing. I have sent a mild interview to the Associated Press from here and I am issuing one today. I have given expression to my pent up feeling in the press ...

Yours affectionately,

(sd/. Tej Bahadur Saprū)

135. T.B. Saprū to C. Rajagopalachari, Expressing Admiration at the
Latter's Courage

T.B. Saprū Papers No. R. 21, Roll No. S 1/5, Microfilm, NMML.

(Camp) Ratlam Kothi, Indore, C.I.

25th July 1942.

My dear Mr. Rajagopalachari,

... I can quite realise your feeling of anguish in separating yourself from the Mahatma. Unfortunately for many years past public opinion has been undergoing a rapid process of demoralisation and every one who has ventured during this period to differ from the Mahatma or Jawaharlal Nehru has had to put up with a distrust of his motives. He has been described as a coward, a traitor and a self-seeker. So far the Congress press has not been very bitter against you, but whether it is bitter or going to be more bitter against you, I cannot help admiring the courage which you have shown on this occasion. I entirely agree with you that the Mahatma's proposals ... may easily lead to communal trouble and internal disorder and if Government will take, as I think they will, some steps to suppress the movement it will leave a legacy of great bitterness behind. The surest way to defeat the object which the Mahatma has in view is by starting this movement at this juncture ... To my mind it is ridiculous to say that the British should quit India and yet with our consent they and the Americans may continue to keep their army in India for our defence. Nor do I believe in the facile assumption that if the British leave we shall compose our differences.

I yield to no one in my desire for full self-government, but I also believe that the self-government cannot be had in the manner in which the Mahatma desires to achieve it particularly at this juncture. I have suggested in a short interview that this imprecisely the occasion when the leaders of different parties—Congress, League, Hindu Sabha, Christians, Parsis, Sikhs and the Depressed classes—should meet together without any commitments and in the interest of the country try to compose their differences. I have made this suggestion not because I believe in what Mr. Amery has been saying but because I think it is up to us to settle our differences even in the midst of these depressing conditions. Once we do it I cannot see how the British Government can stand between you and national government. Frankly I do want a national government, but by that I do not mean the government of any particular coterie—the Congress or non-Congress, the Muslim League or non-Muslim League Muslims. You will thus see that our minds are running on the same lines even though I may not agree with the demand of Pakistan. I think, however, that the matter must be discussed with the Muslims freely and conscientiously, but in this matter it is also necessary that Mr. Jinnah should be prepared to discuss the ways and means of securing the protection of the interests of the minorities and not insist upon a surrender to his conclusions. I am issuing another statement to the press today.

... Meanwhile with kindest regards and my sincere esteem,
I remain,

Yours sincerely,
(sd/. Tej Bahadur Sapru)

C. Rajagopalachari Esqr.,
48, Bazlullah Road, Madras.

136. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to Jawaharlal Nehru from Simla, 25 July 1942, about Importance of Chinese and American Sympathy
Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part I, Vol. 2, NMML.

My dear J.N.,

You must be back in Allahabad by now. I was to have joined Bapu in Bombay but my brother is very anxious for me to remain with him till Aug. 15th. Bapu writes to say I should do so. I presume—as he says ‘you will gain nothing by coming to Bombay’ that he will not start the movement straightaway. I have, however, asked him to wire me in case he changes his mind. I have been away for some little time now and am in the dark as to what his mental processes meanwhile have been. I do not want to lose Chinese or American sympathy both of which we seem to have alienated I hope only temporarily. The war position of Russia and China is very desperate at the moment. Therefore I feel a little—say three months’—wait won’t injure us and will cut the ground further from the feet of these extremely short-sighted ‘rulers’ of ours. What do you think?

The propaganda down the B.B.C. against us is iniquitous. I wish someone like you would contradict it whenever possible. It is the misrepresentation that is so cruel. And then ‘we fight for world freedom’ every morning makes me really sick.

Forgive my absence at the States Peoples' Executive on the 5th. Best of luck and much love,

Yours

Amrit

P.S. If the Axis don't win this summer I think they will lose at the end of a very long war. What do you say to this?

137. Congress Activity in Delhi in Anticipation of AICC Meeting in Bombay: Extract from Fortnightly Report for Delhi for the Second Half of July 1942

CID Office Delhi Special Branch File No. 1/42, NAI.

In anticipation of the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress committee in Bombay, there has been more political activity in Delhi during the fortnight than at any time since the last session of the legislature. The Congress campaign to enroll volunteers for civil disobedience continued up to the 20th July, with a number of street corner meetings every day. The tone of the speeches is becoming more bitter and anti-British. During the fortnight both Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Delhi.... Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a public meeting of six thousand persons on the 18th July: a full report of his speech has been forwarded separately to the Home Department.¹

Congress activities during the fortnight included three meetings in the rural area including one on the 26th July in a village named Nangal Dewat, south-west of Delhi Cantonment, where the Air Force authorities have been proposing to take up land for the construction of an aerodrome. The Deputy Commissioner is in touch with the Area commander regarding this case, which if carelessly handled might give rise to trouble.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru's speech of 18 May is carried below.

138. 'Last Struggle of Gandhiji': Rajendra Prasad's and J.B. Kripalani's Speeches

The Tribune, 26 July 1942.

Patna, July 25

Reference was made to the proposed campaign of satyagraha by Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani when addressing the Tarapore Kisan Conference in Monghyr district which they attended on their way from Wardha after the Congress Working Committee meeting.

After explaining the implications of the Wardha Resolution, Dr. Rajendra Prasad pointed out that ever since the war started the Congress had been thinking and attempting to do something for the defence of this country and for the protection of the people of India, but the British Government always stood in their way. Now they were being accused of not helping the Government in their own war effort. The Congress had now come to fully realize the fact that their emancipation did not lie with the British or any other foreign agencies and hence the cry of 'Quit India.'

Acharya Kripalani, speaking about the 'struggle ahead' said that this time they would not be content by merely courting imprisonment and suffering in jails. This would be the last struggle of Mahatma Gandhi, he said. It was the duty of every son and daughter of India to participate in the struggle. He had high hopes from the Kisans of Bihar, who had lent their support and co-operation to the Mahatma in his very first struggle in this country in Champaran.

Acharya Kripalani repudiated the suggestion that the Congress was lending support to the enemy by launching a mass movement at this time. On the other hand, he said, Britain was indirectly helping her own enemy by not conceding India her freedom and independence which was legitimately her due.

Finally he appealed to Britain to do the right thing at the right moment and avert the trouble.

139. M.K. Gandhi on Fasting in Non-violent Action

Harijan, 26 July 1942, in *CWMG*, 76, pp. 317–19.

If the struggle which we are seeking to avoid with all our might has to come, and if it is to remain non-violent as it must in order to succeed, fasting is likely to play an important part in it. It has its place in the tussle with authority and with our own people in the event of wanton acts of violence and obstinate riots for instance.

There is a natural prejudice against it as part of a political struggle. It has a recognized place in religious practice. But it is considered a vulgar interpolation in politics by the ordinary politician though it has always been resorted to by prisoners in a haphazard way with more or less success. By fasting, however, they have always succeeded in drawing public attention and disturbing the peace of jail authorities.

My own fasts have always, as I hold, been strictly according to the law of satyagraha. Fellow satyagrahis too in South Africa fasted partially or wholly. My fasts have been varied. There was the Hindu-Muslim unity fast of 21 days in 1924 started under the late Maulana Mahomed Ali's roof in Delhi. The indeterminate fast against the Mac Donald award was taken in the Yeravda Prison in 1932. The 21 days' purificatory fast was begun in the Yeravda Prison and was finished at Lady Thakersey's, as the Government would not take the burden of my being in the Prison in that condition. Then followed another fast in the Yeravda Prison in 1933 against the Government refusal to let me carry on anti-untouchability work through *Harijan* (issued from prison) on the same basis as facilities had been allowed me four months before. They would not yield, but they discharged me when their medical advisers thought I could not live many days if the fast was not given up. Then followed the ill-fated Rajkot fast in 1939. A false step taken by me thoughtlessly during that fast thwarted the brilliant result that would otherwise certainly have been achieved. In spite of all these fasts, fasting has not been accepted as a recognized part of satyagraha. It has only been tolerated by the politicians. I have however been driven to the conclusion that fasting unto death is an integral part of satyagraha programme, and it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armoury under given circumstances. Not everyone is qualified for undertaking it without a proper course of training.

I may not burden this note with an examination of the circumstances under which fasting may be resorted to and the training required for it. Non-violence in its positive aspect as benevolence (I do not use the word love as it has fallen into disrepute) is the greatest force because of the limitless scope it affords for self-suffering without causing or intending any physical or material injury to the wrongdoer. The object always is to evoke the best in him.

Self-suffering is an appeal to his better nature, as a retaliation is to his baser. Fasting under proper circumstances is such an appeal par excellence. If the politician does not perceive its propriety in political matters, it is because it is a novel use of this very fine weapon....

140. M.K. Gandhi's Talk with Vinoba Bhave and Others,
26 July 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 333-5.

I have sent for you here so that I can lay before you what is going on in my mind, and if you find in me impatience or any other fault you may let me know.

I have tried, as I am trying, my best to give up the idea of fasting which has occupied my mind these days. But I find that it has taken firm hold of my mind. So far I have undertaken a number of fasts and I do not think any of them was unsuccessful. Some of these were resorted to for personal or domestic reasons. Their result was also good. The fast undertaken for Hindu-Muslim unity, too, had a good effect though it did not last long. The fast unto death undertaken against the proposed separation of the Harijans had an instantaneous effect. People did not come and sit down with me but went into action. Even the president of the Hindu Mahasabha came to me and conceded my point. I liked all that. The twenty-one days' self-purification fast, occasioned by the impurity which had crept into the movement, was intended to be the first of a series of such fasts which was to go on for a year. But co-workers did not like the idea and I had to postpone it. But now I find that I cannot postpone it further. At the moment violence is on the rampage and darkness has descended upon the world. The poison has spread to India also. The Government wants to pit our own people against us and watch the spectacle. How can I tolerate that? I therefore feel that without sacrifice this raging fire cannot be quenched.

There are two kinds of fasts: one which is undertaken of one's own volition and the other which is undertaken in obedience to a general. What happens in a violent war? The soldiers put their faith in the general and plunge into the fire. Why cannot this be done in a non-violent war? This time I have made a slight change in my concept of non-violence. In 1920 and 1930 I had laid down that observance of ahimsa in thought, word and deed was indispensable. Now I feel that it is not right to expect four hundred million people to accept this view and to wait till they do. Now I only tell them to abstain from violence in word and deed. When I send any satyagrahi to break a law, I merely say: 'Leave your lathi here and go and do this work without using abusive language.' The success of the work which this will ensure will drive out thoughts of violence from his heart also. Supposing a non-violent struggle has been started at my behest and later on there is an outbreak of violence, I will put up with that too, because eventually it is God who is inspiring me and things will shape as He wills. If He wants to destroy the world through violence using me as His instrument, how can I prevent it? He is so subtle that it is beyond man to know Him. Though electricity is a subtler power, we can certainly find out something about it. But God is still subtler and all-pervading. All that we can say about Him is that it is a Power at whose bidding everything goes on. But it is impossible to find out what that Power is. We can only put our faith in Him and it is that faith which is moving me.

When I hear of the destruction of the Germans, the British and the Japanese, the value of their sacrifices greatly increases in my eyes. How brave must have been the man who sank *H.M.S. Prince of Wales*! He threw himself against the engine and sank the enemy ship. What courage!

We have not shown any courage as yet. After going to jail we have fought for small things. A few like you have studied there. But that has no place in my present programme. If Pyarelal says that he would like to finish the Koran or if you say that you would like to complete the writing of an unfinished book, it will not do. This time we have to finish the entire work in three or four days. Breaking all the laws of the Government includes fasting also. If they put us in jail we will give up food and water and immolate ourselves.

Now the question arises—with whom should the beginning be made? For that I have selected myself because the work won't make any progress without my sacrifice. I want your co-operation. There is no cause for anyone to get alarmed or feel unhappy. It is only a matter of doing one's duty. After all the body has to perish one day. It is therefore better to let it perish in a noble cause.

KISHORELAL: If the general himself should die at the beginning, what would happen to the army? Therefore in my opinion you should choose someone and begin with him. You should first make use of his sacrifice and offer yourself only afterwards, when you think the time has arrived.

GANDHIJI: Who can that be? Suppose Jankiben says 'My body is not worth much, let me go' or Shastriji says 'I will go!'

KISHORELAL: No, no, I meant those who count.

GANDHIJI: That is what I say. Suppose Shastriji is worth a pice, Jankibehn worth a rupee and I worth a guinea. If we have to pay a guinea for the thing, then I must sacrifice myself. Moreover who will decide that the time to sacrifice myself has come?

KISHORELAL: You yourself will decide.

GANDHIJI: If that is so I decide it right now that first of all I should sacrifice myself. What do you think?

VINOBA BHAVE: I think you are right. But let me repeat what I have understood you to say. To my mind you mean that a fast may be undertaken from one's own choice or in obedience to a general in whom one has faith.

GANDHIJI: That is right. Let me add that to check the violence that is raging there is no other alternative. This therefore has become necessary. I am prepared to find more time for a fuller discussion if it is considered necessary.

141. M.K. Gandhi Warns Japan: 'No Willing Welcome from India'; 'Our Movement Should In No Way Be Misunderstood'

The Tribune, 27 July 1942.

Bombay, July 26

'I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. You have been gravely misinformed as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we had wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity we would have done it as soon as the war broke out nearly three years ago', writes Mahatma Gandhi in the 'Harijan' under the caption 'To Every Japanese.'

Mahatma Gandhi says:

‘I must confess at the outset that though I have no illwill against you, I intensely dislike your attack upon China. From your lofty height you have descended to imperial ambition. You will fail to realize that ambition and may become the authors of the dismemberment of Asia, thus unwittingly preventing world federation and brotherhood without which there can be no hope for humanity.

‘Ever since I was a lad of 18 studying in London over 50 years ago, I learnt through the writings of the late Sir Edwin Arnold to prize the many excellent qualities of your nation. I was thrilled when in South Africa I learnt of your brilliant victory over Russian arms. After my return to India from South Africa in 1915, I came in close touch with Japanese monks who lived as members of our Ashram from time to time. One of them became a valuable member of the Ashram in Sewagram, and his application to duty, his dignified bearing, his unfailing devotion to daily worship, his affability, unruffledness under varying circumstances, and his natural smile, which was positive evidence of his inner peace, has endeared him to all of us. And now that owing to your declaration of war against Great Britain he has been taken away from us, we miss him as a dear co-worker...

Unprovoked Attack against China

In the background of these pleasant recollections I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land....

.... Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British power from India, should in no way be misunderstood.

In fact if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the independence of India a recognition of that independence by Britain should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover the reported profession sorts [*sic*] ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

No Welcome from India

I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India by making her free for resisting all militarist and imperialist ambition whether it is called British imperialism, German Nazism or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarization of the world....

Personally, I fear that without declaring the independence of India the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare.

If they copy it, their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom, must come to naught. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognizing now the freedom of India, and turning sullen India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

Appeal in the Name of Humanity

To Britain and the Allies we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions and in their own self-interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me

that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies some other power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win you will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds however skillfully believed....

142. Subhas Chandra Bose and M.K. Gandhi: M.K. Gandhi's
Interview to a Journalist, before 25 July 1942¹
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 328–30.

He talked of the public feeling in his province. 'It is more anti-British than pro-Japanese', he said. 'There is a vague notion that we have had enough of this rule, and almost anything would be better than the existing state of things. People are happy when Subhas Babu says on the radio that there are no differences between him and you and when he says you are now out to fight for liberty at any cost.'

GANDHIJI: But I suppose you know that there he is wrong and I cannot possibly appropriate the compliments he is paying me.

'Liberty at any cost' has a vastly different connotation for me from what it has for him. 'At any cost' does not exist in my dictionary. It does not for instance include bringing in foreigners in order to help us win our liberty. I have no doubt that it means exchanging one form of slavery for another possibly much worse. But of course we have to fight for our liberty and make whatever sacrifice it demands. In spite of all the hypocrisy that you find in all the inspired Press of Britain and America I do not relent. I deliberately use the word hypocrisy, for they are now proving that when they were talking of the freedom of India they did not mean it. So far as I am concerned I have no doubt about the righteousness of my step. It seems to me to be axiomatic that the Allies are in for a defeat this time if they will not do this initial act of justice, and thus put their own case on an unassailable basis. If they don't, they must face the opposition of those who cannot tolerate their rule and are prepared to die in order to get rid of it. 'Convert the deepening ill-will into goodwill' is a sound proposition. It is not open to them to say that we must smother our consciences and say or do nothing because there is war. That is why I have made up my mind that it would be a good thing if a million people were shot in a brave and non-violent rebellion against British rule. It may be that it may take us years before we can evolve order out of chaos. But we can then face the world, we cannot face the world today. Avowedly the different nations are fighting for their liberty. Germany, Japan, Russia, China are pouring their blood and money like water. What is *our* record? You talk of the newspapers doing good business out of the war. It is a shame to be thus bought and to refrain from speaking out at Government's dictation. There is many a way of earning an honest crust of bread. If British money—which is our money—can buy us Heaven help our country!

We are betraying a woeful cowardice. I do not mind the blood-bath in which Europe is plunged. It is bad enough, but there is a great deal of heroism—mothers losing their only children, wives their husbands and so on. Lord Lytton's only son was killed the other day. British history is filled with such heroic sacrifice. It is not the criticism of the British and American Press that worries me, but it is our Press listening to the British censor. If only to resist that awful atmosphere I must gird up my loins.

I do not feel flattered when Subhas Babu says I am right. I am not right in the sense he means. For there he is attributing pro-Japanese feeling to me. If I were to discover that by some

strange miscalculation I had not realized the fact that I was helping the entry of the Japanese in this country, I should not hesitate to retrace my steps. As regards the Japanese, I am certain that we should lay down our lives in order to resist them as we would to resist the British.

But it won't be the work of human hands. It will be the work of a Force—incalculable and invisible—which works, often upsetting all our calculations. I rely implicitly on it. Otherwise I should go mad in face of all this torrent of what I must call irritating criticism. They do not know my agony. I cannot express it except perhaps by dying. Was there the slightest suspicion that he wished victory to the Axis arms in order that the British may be humbled and their power in India may be destroyed? Gandhiji asked the friend to disabuse himself of any such notion.

Destruction of the British Power is not dependent on Japanese or German arms. If it depended on them, there would be nothing to be proud of, apart from the blight that would settle upon the world. But what matters to me is that I cannot be happy or proud if someone comes in and drives away my enemy. Where do I come in there? I cannot possibly enthuse over such a thing. I want to have the pleasure of having offered up my sacrifice for fighting the enemy in my own house. If I have not that strength I cannot prevent the other from coming in. Only I must find a middle path to prevent the new enemy coming in. I am sure God will help me to find the way. I do not mind honest, strong, healthy criticism. All the manufactured criticism that I find being made today is sheer tomfoolery, meant to overawe me and demoralize the Congress ranks.

It is a foul game. They do not know the fire that is raging in my breast. I have no false notions of prestige; no personal considerations would make me take a step that I know is sure to plunge the country into a conflagration.

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's 'Fire Raging in Me', 25-7-1942. The journalist was present not in his capacity as a journalist 'but as one interested in Gandhiji's movement'.

143. M.K. Gandhi's 'Plea for Reason'

Harijan, 26 July 1942, in *CWMG*, 76, pp. 330–2.

The chorus of indignation from Great Britain and America with which the Working Committee resolution on the contemplated mass action has been greeted and the veiled or open threats which it has hurled at the Congress will not deter the Congress from its purpose.

Hitherto it has thriven on opposition and attempts at suppression. It will not be otherwise this time. The suppression, of which perhaps the hysterical outburst in America and Great Britain is a precursor, may cow down the people for the moment but it will never put out the light of revolt once it has been lighted. *The Daily Herald* and the Labour Party¹ have excelled all other critics in exaggeration and abuse. How nice it would have been if they had taken the trouble to understand the Congress demand.

The justice of the demand for ending the British Power has never been questioned, the moment chosen for enforcing it is the target of attack. It is clear as crystal in the Working Committee resolution why this moment is chosen. Let me paraphrase it. India is not playing any effective part in the War. Some of us feel ashamed that it is so and, what is more, we feel that if we were free from the foreign yoke, we should play a worthy, nay, a decisive part in the World War which has yet to reach its climax. We know that if India does not become free *now*, the hidden discontent will burst forth into a welcome to the Japanese, should they effect a landing.

We feel that such an event would be a calamity of the first magnitude. We can avoid it if India gains her freedom. To distrust this simple, natural and honest declaration is to court disaster. But the critics say: 'To whom are the British rulers to hand the keys on their withdrawal?' It is a good question. Here is what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, has said:

The Congress always stands, firstly for sympathy towards democratic countries, secondly, never desires to embarrass Britain and war efforts, and, thirdly, it stands for opposition to the Japanese aggression. The Congress does not desire to take power for itself but for all. If real power is handed over to the Congress, surely it will approach other parties and will persuade them to join.

The Congress President added that he had no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League or any other party provided it was real independence. That party will have to approach other parties as no single party can function properly without the co-operation of other parties.

The only thing needful is to hand over complete control without reservation save that during the war period the Allied troops will operate to stem Japanese or Axis attack. But they will have no power of interference with the affairs of India which will be as free as Great Britain herself.

Surely, there is nothing here to cavil at for anyone. That party or a combination which takes over control of India will have to look to the remaining parties for its retention of power. There is no hope of the parties coming together so long as they have to look not to one another but to an outsider for support and sustenance. Not one of the Viceroy's numerous Indian councillors are dependent upon anybody but the Viceroy for the positions they hold. How can the great or small representative parties operate without mutual support? In a free India even the Congress could not function efficiently for a day without the support of the smallest party. For in a free India, at least for some time to come, even the strongest party will have no military backing. There will be no military to back. There will only be raw police in the first stage unless the existing police will serve the National Government on its terms. But the support, such as it may be, that free India will be able to render to the Allied cause, will be of a sterling character. Its possibilities will be limitless and there will be no motive left for welcoming Japanese arms. On the contrary, they will then look to the Allied arms to repel any Japanese or other attack, unless all India has by then become non-violent. In any case, the Allied arms are there today and tomorrow and till the end of the War whether they are needed for India's protection or not. If this presentation of the implications of the Congress demand is not appreciated by the Allies' Press or the Allies themselves, Indian public men should be forgiven if they doubt the sincerity of the fierce opposition which is being organized with ominous unanimity. The latter can only stiffen India's suspicion and resistance.

SEVAGRAM, July 26, 1942

¹ A resolution passed by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on July 23 had denounced the 'very contemplation' of a civil disobedience movement as 'a proof of political irresponsibility'. *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. II, Note, p. 455fn.



144. Vallabhbhai Patel on Aims and Objectives of M.K. Gandhi's Call to British to Quit India, Ahmedabad, 26 July 1942¹

CWSVP, Vol. 9, pp. 129–34.

When the war began Congress Working Committee passed a resolution that India has been dragged into the war without the consent of the Congress. We are ready to forget past record of the Government if the aims of war are clearly stated. Congress can think of supporting the war. Many a times we demanded that. The matter was discussed in Parliament but the result was big zero.

After that A.I.C.C. session was held at Poona. The Congress was accused of having faith in non-violence and accepts the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi so Congress support has no value. Congress and especially Mahatma believed that we must see as to which side is more moral and give a moral support to that side. But the Government did not want moral support, it wanted help in military equipment and recruits in the army. So in the Poona meeting of A.I.C.C., having decided to differ from Gandhiji, but on condition to differ, if the government desired strengthening the army, then even parting company with Gandhiji. We can tell people but it can happen only when people feel that this land is theirs. So that we may be able to open our mouth before the public. We meant that Government should immediately form a national cabinet. But we did not get any reply. So Congress decided that if it maintains silence, it will lose its identity.

Thus when Congress was ignored we felt that the empire did not care for us at all. So we resolved to express our moral protest and gave full powers to Gandhiji to launch a struggle. It had moral effect on the entire world. Then the empire lost their vast territory of Singapore, Malaya and Burma. Ceylon was attacked and there was a danger of attack on India. So in order to see whether the government came to its senses we decided to postpone our moral struggle.

The British empire sent its representative Sir Stafford Cripps to India. He was a friend of many a Congressman, so they and many other people felt that he was a man of progressive ideas and so the intention of the government should be pure in sending him and it wanted some compromise and so we decided to think over the proposal which he brought with him and we authorized Maulana Azad to negotiate with him and present before the Working Committee his talks with Cripps but Cripps felt that a meeting with Congress leaders should precede meeting Gandhiji because Gandhiji was the guiding spirit of the Congress. So Gandhiji was invited by a wire. Gandhiji informed that he was of no use, because he was against any violent war and he had separated himself from the Congress, yet if Cripps insists he would come to meet him.

Thus Gandhiji went to Delhi. There what he saw was nauseating and his soft feelings for Britishers and the Government evaporated. He plainly told Stafford Cripps, if a thoughtless person like Amery had brought such proposals then he would not have been surprised but he was considered to be a friend of India as well as Russia and a man of progressive ideas. So, why did he bring such proposals? Why did he come to inflict such a sinful blow on India?

Then Gandhiji left but Congress, in order to independently examine Cripps proposals and clearly know what they were, negotiated and deliberated for full fifteen days. Initially Cripps talked sweetly. He also said that Viceroy would rule like a constitutional monarch of England. Congress also asked him to sidetrack his other proposals like the partition of India and the merger of native states and wanted to know as to what he immediately proposed to do because why talk about the future. When British Government proposed to give independence to India,

because it might be that in future they might not have anything in their hand to give. So talks about that could be held when the time comes. Congress wanted to know if he proposed to give something at present on the basis of which people could be persuaded to help war efforts. All those days he talked sweetly and on last day he wrote a letter to Maulana Azad that as Congress had demanded national government it had reversed its stand which it had taken during the talks but really it was he who had gone back and leveled a false charge against the Congress.

So Gandhiji was exasperated. Thereafter A.I.C.C. session was held at Allahabad. During the time some Congress leaders had with pure intention asked the people to prepare for a fight. Government found an excuse. Government also misconstrued Jawaharlal's lectures and some portions of the speeches were selected out of context and were displayed in trams, trains and even on roads. When Working Committee met at Allahabad Gandhiji expressed his opinion that intentions of the empire seemed to be of a doubtful nature, so it was our duty that we should tell our rulers that for their good and our good they should quit India but this was something new.

When there were talks of Cripps' coming here I had come here and we had met at this place.² But there is a lot of difference between that time and this time. At that time people were running and I had told you not to run away and at the time when we are bombed like other countries, India also would not be in the hands of British. After that the situation has gone from bad to worse. Today also everywhere there is looting. We formed protection force and took the help of police wherever possible, started cheap grain shops to lessen miseries of the people. But when the sky is torn how can it be seen. Today for a drop of kerosene oil one has to stand in queue for hours and being pushed here and there. All these are signs of war approaching nearer our land. Till we have not our own Government such things will go on happening.

.... Take a small illustration of the dearness of cloth. In this city cloth is produced in thousands of tons but it is like sweetmeat seller's children remaining hungry. The cloth merchants here can make arrangements for distribution of cloth. They have no problems of booking of wagons from outside. But of the cloth that is produced in our mills forty per cent is taken away by the Government and most of the remaining stock is being sent to foreign countries.

One can live without cloth but one cannot live without food. I advise grain merchants and their associations to take out their hidden stock. When the harvesting seasons come and fresh grain stocks come to the market, then there will be no value of hoarded grain. Enemies burn heaps of grains.

.... I have told you that the Working Committee has passed a resolution. We were ready to sidetrack Gandhiji and non-violence and wanted to help. But as soon as Cripps brought the proposals of British Government, Gandhiji told us to give up all hopes of compromising with the Government. Understand the full implication of his asking the Britishers to quit India. Everybody knows that there is going to be an invasion. Not ninety-nine but 99.75 per cent people of this country say let this devil go, we do not mind if another devil comes. So much poison is there in the minds of people against Britishers. When people hear about the victories of Germany or Japan, they rejoice. Nobody has heard about Britishers victory. When there is delay in the conquest of Germany or Japan people get deflected and say 'Why there is so much delay?'

Russia is fighting. We admire its courage. It fights because the people know that they are fighting for the freedom of their country, but for whom should India fight? We are not independent. So Gandhiji asks Britishers to quit India.

They can stay on one condition. Their army might stay here but our independence should be intact. They can stay here by signing a treaty with us. The treaty should be of the type which they have with America and China. They can stay here in a way that they have established relations of love with Russia. They cannot stay here as ex-rulers.

Yet they say that they will reconquer Burma. Now we ask them as to why Burmese people did not co-operate with them. Indians desire to know that in Burma, though there was no difficulty, why did they run away from Burma. Can they give a guarantee that what happened in Burma will not be repeated here? From there they have retreated, turned their back, escaped and allowed the Burmese to be massacred.

.... Some people here call this war as people's war. Which people? Russia or China can term the war as people's war, but how can India call it people's war. It was not people's war and that is why communists who call it people's war were arrested here. Uptill now communists were unlawful but they were released from jail and made lawful to fight the Congress.

.... In Wardha Working Committee it was decided that if we had to repulse the attack, we could do it only if we were free. *Japan Radio*, day in and day out, says loudly that they do not want even an inch of our land and they are fighting in order to drive out the foreign rulers. Some of our people have joined them. They say that it is a matter of patriotism. Subhash Babu is also there but we are not to be led away by Japanese propaganda. We should not also believe that Moscow will come and make us free.

So, Congress has decided that it does not require anybody's help and asked Britishers to quit India silently. But they won't leave India quietly. From the time resolution was passed, its newspapers have raised a hue and cry and showered abuses on us. They say that they want to defend the country but which country? If they wanted to defend then who opened the gates for the enemy to enter? Because they could not retain Burma, attack on India became easy.

Those people who are enemies of our liberty are here and they are real fifth columnists. American journalists threaten and the mouthpiece of the Labour Party *Daily Herald* advises that they would not help us if we do something. But I ask as to when they have helped and what kind of help were they to give? In the year 1930, Labour Party sent Gandhiji to jail and held Round Table Conference.

Ramsay Macdonald who gave Communal Award, which gave an impetus to communal tension, was a leader of Labour Party. This is the reason why we tell the Britishers to quit India.

Yet if they want our help they have to come to their senses. Forty crores of Indians know how to fight with nine crores of Japanese people and they also know how to die. But today we get suffocated from all sides and have forgotten how to die, but once we get open air, then if nothing else we will realize how to die.

.... When Gandhiji at the age of seventy-five is ready for self-sacrifice how can we sit quietly gossiping? Gandhiji stayed here for twenty years. He taught us the hymn of independence and you raised the slogan 'Victory to Gandhiji'. When will you get such a golden opportunity? Who else has been born in this country who has taught us to die for independence in the last two hundred years? Today when we have Gandhiji with us we have not to miss this golden opportunity. There might be calamities of various types but it is better to die a martyr's death than to die like flies.

People ask us as to how to fight. Let every man and woman behave as if he or she is the citizen of an independent nation. He or she has to know that for that courage is required. There is risk but the risk of invasion is much greater. This is the war time. If we sit aside during the

times of war then those who have been fighting will distribute the world amongst themselves. Today India can divert the current of war. There is no end of war except India's independence.

.... Such an opportunity will not come again. Do not have fear in your mind. Do not miss this golden opportunity. Let the rulers not say that Gandhiji was all alone. He has launched the struggle at the age of seventy four and he has taken the burden on his shoulders. So, we can demand your contribution. Time may arrive or not but you have to be prepared for highest sacrifice. Do not ask for programme. All the programmes beginning with the agitation against Rowlatt Act till the individual satyagraha are to be implemented in the struggle which we are to launch. No-tax campaign, civil disobedience and such other battles which were directly or indirectly launched to break the Government machinery will be revived by the Congress. Railway employees will stop running the railways, postal employees will leave their jobs, telegraph offices will not be allowed to function, Government servants will leave their jobs, schools and colleges will be closed and entire machinery of the Government will not be allowed to function. All of you shall have to co-operate in these activities. If all of you actively take part in the struggle then the struggle will end in four days and Englishmen shall have to quit India. Even if the government arrests all the workers all Indians are Congressmen and as such they will carry on the struggle. Everybody shall have to be ready when called upon to fight, then independence will knock our door.

They ask us as to whom they should hand over the Government because we are fighting with each other. There were not communal disputes in Burma and when those dwarfs (Japanese) came there did they ask anybody as to whom to hand over the rein of administration? Why ask? Hand over to Muslim League, hand over to a hardened criminal passing on the way, but quit India.

¹ Sardar Patel ke Bhashnon (Speeches of Sardar Patel).

² Sardar Patel was addressing a public meeting at Ahmedabad. It was attended by about a lakh of people.

145. AICC Circular No. 15, Dated 27 July 1942, from J.B. Kripalani to All PCCs

AICC Papers, F. No. P-1 (Part 2)/1942, NMML.

Dear friend,

Problems arising out of the evacuation of our countrymen from Burma, Malaya, Penang etc. have been receiving the careful consideration of the Working Committee from time to time. The Committee, Gandhiji, the Congress President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others have drawn attention to the acute hardships that the Indian evacuees had to go through. Some hardship and suffering was inevitable. But our countrymen had to suffer a great deal more owing to racial discrimination and the incompetence and negligence of those in authority.

The Indian evacuees who survived the difficulties on the way had yet other problems to face on their arrival in India. Various public agencies organized camps to help the evacuees to reach safely their respective destinations in their own homes and elsewhere. But it is not enough that they should have reached these destinations safely. If they are provided with suitable work they will swell the ranks of the unemployed and dislocate the village economy. The bread problem for most of them therefore remains to be solved.

According to figures published by the Government the number of Indian evacuees and refugees who have arrived in India is in the neighbourhood of five lakhs. Only a very small number of these are educated or have some technical skill. Most of these belong to the labour and peasant classes. They are our countrymen and have a right to expect help from us in their distress. What we have done so far is to give them temporary relief which is not enough. They have to begin their lives over again in the homeland to which they have returned after a long or short exile. Several Indian industrial and commercial firms in the country have offered to absorb such of them as have the necessary education and skill, in their establishments. The Indian Chamber of Commerce is we understand, formulating some scheme for this purpose. Slowly, we hope, the new comers will be absorbed in the population. Till then they will require our anxious care and help.

The Central Government has announced a Scheme by which allowances will be paid to indigent refugees according to certain prescribed standards. The administration of the scheme has been left over to the local governments. We are afraid the benefits of the scheme are not being availed of by a large number of refugees who have no knowledge of the same. This is especially the case with those who have returned to the villages. It is necessary that the refugees and evacuees whether in urban or rural areas be placed in full possession of all the facts about the relief schemes of the Government. Our local Congress Committees urban and rural should therefore establish contacts with them and help in securing to them the allowances fixed by the Government. If it is necessary to meet local officials in this connection that may be done. It should be our task to see that the scheme as announced is worked fairly and fully. If this is to be effectively done each local congress committee should maintain a register containing the names and addresses of each evacuee in the locality, whether he is suitably employed or not and whether in case of unemployment he is getting the necessary Government help....

.... Congressmen and Congress Committees will carefully note the schemes and decisions announced by the government in the matter of evacuees and take steps to see that those responsible for carrying them out do so without delay.

.... You will please see that all the subordinate Committees under you get copies of the circular translated in the language of the province.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- J.B. Kripalani
General Secretary

146. B. Shiva Rao to T.B. Saprú, 27 July 1942, regarding the 'Small Round Table Conference'

Correspondence with T.B. Saprú, B. Shiva Rao Papers, NMML.

.... I am very glad indeed that you have taken the positive line of suggesting a small round table conference. I would like you to take the initiative in this matter and invite both Congress leaders and Jinnah to this conference ... But it must be held as soon as possible, if we are to avert a crisis. You must have noticed that Gandhi has spoken ominously today about the place of fasting in a struggle. I would beg of you not to be influenced by Jinnah's offensiveness in the past towards the Conference and yourself. If he refuses, it cannot be helped, but an invitation should, in my opinion, go to him.... the invitees should not exceed 20 or 25 ... The

RTC that you have in mind should take place on the basis of Jinnah's own formula which was outlined in a resolution of the Working Committee of the League in December last, and which I understand from Liaquat still holds good: namely that all controversial issues should wait till the end of the war, changes to be made should within the framework of the existing Constitution and Muslims to get a real share of power at the Centre and in the Provinces. I think the RTC should examine the Cripps proposals in the light of criticisms which have been directed against it and put forward a definite scheme for the period of the war. As far as I can make out, the Government of India will not give much time to Congress leaders to develop their plans after the meeting of the AICC. Cripps' latest broadcast to America will not make the situation easier because of its frankness and firmness....

147. Jawaharlal Nehru Dubs Sir Stafford Cripps as the 'Devil's Advocate': Broadcast to America Condemned

The Bombay Chronicle, 29 July 1942.

'It is sad beyond measure that a man like Sir Stafford Cripps should allow himself to become the Devil's Advocate. He has thus injured Indo-British relations more than any other Englishman could have done'. Thus observes Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru commenting on Cripps' broadcast to America.

Nehru on Choice before Britain

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has issued the following statement to the Press:-

I have refrained from saying anything about the various comments and criticisms made in India and outside on the Working Committee's resolution. Most of these criticisms come from people who have developed a habit of criticizing us.

British and American criticisms have proceeded either on a complete misunderstanding of that resolution or a desire to pervert it.

The resolution is clear enough and if people refuse to understand it for what it is, this simply shows that they do not want to understand.

It is said that at this extreme crisis responsible people should shut their eyes to hard facts and should deliberately ignore reality. That reality will not cease to be because of this attitude.

Imperialist Tune

Sir Stafford Cripps' recent broadcast to America has, however, compelled me to say a few words. This broadcast is so full of misrepresentations of the Congress attitude that I am amazed at it. Like a clever lawyer Sir Stafford has picked out phrases from Mahatma Gandhi's statements without reference to their context and tried to prove the British imperialist case. This is no time for lawyer's quibbling and no statesman who shoulders responsibility can afford to do this. If there is one consideration which has been paramount before the Congress leaders it is that of the Defence of India.

Campaign of Calumny

Sir Stafford talks lightly of anarchy and chaos. The right way to prevent their development is for British rule to cease to be and for a Provisional Government of Free India representing the major groups and parties in the country to take its place. The right way to do this is for Great

Britain not to talk to us in offensive and patronizing language, but to approach us in all humility with repentance for all the evils she has done to India and is still doing to her.

Sir Stafford talks about war and about danger to India. We are more concerned with that danger than he can be, for we shall suffer most by it. If war comes to India it will be the people of India who will fight and die in defence of their land and their homes. It will be the people of India also, when they are in a position to do so, who will pour out their help to China and the right cause.

The situation between England and India is bad enough in all conscience. And yet Sir Stafford must needs go out of his way to make it far worse and must constitute himself as the champion of the Muslims and the Depressed Classes and others. I know my Muslim countrymen a little better than Sir Stafford does and I know that what he says about them is calumny, for vast numbers of them are devoted to the cause of India's independence.

The Devil's Advocate

Sir Stafford has also on various occasions brought out non-violence as an insuperable barrier to prevent freedom in India. If there has been anything clearly and definitely stated on our behalf it is this: That Free India will defend the country in every way through armed forces and by all means. The question on non-violence in this connection has not arisen. Indeed, the question of any adverse effect on the war cannot arise because the whole object is to make India stronger for defence.

It is absurd then to talk about weakening India's defence.

The simple issue is the complete recognition of India's independence now and then immediately steps to be taken to give effect to it and to concert measures for the more effective defence of India in co-operation with our Allies....

148. Maulana Azad: 'The Working Committee Resolution Is an Appeal to the United Nations'

The Tribune, 28 July 1942.

New Delhi, July 27

'I regard the Working Committee's resolution as an appeal to the United Nations to intervene on behalf of India. This is the first occasion in the history of the Congress that such an appeal has been made' declared Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Congress president, answering a question whether he has made or is making an appeal to China, Russia and America to intervene, at a press conference this evening in Delhi.

'India', he said, 'does not propose to remain neutral: it has already expressed its sympathy with the Allied Powers. To another question, he said that, if the United Nations are prepared to guarantee India's freedom, any suggestion in regard to interim period, will receive fullest consideration by the Congress. It is not a question of England and India, but it is United Nations and India, as they want to make use of India as an operational base. India's right to independence is not subject to negotiation. It is a fundamental principle. No change which is asked for should in any way weaken the position of the Allies or the United Nations. In fact, it should guarantee India's full weight and support on behalf of the United Nations in the interests of the larger cause and India's defence.'

Answering a question put by a correspondent that the press reaction to the Congress Working Committee's resolution in Britain and America were against the Congress and Congress could thereby lose the sympathy of the United Nations, if it implemented the resolution, the Congress president said: 'It does not reflect the majority opinion of these countries. Even if they were true, so far as the Congress is concerned, it must depend on itself and itself alone.'...

149. M.K. Gandhi's Answers to Questions from the United Press,
London, Sevagram, 28 July 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 339-41.

Q. 1. Will you be satisfied by a joint guarantee by America, China and Soviet Russia?

A. No guarantee is contemplated by the Congress demand, because present delivery of independence is the need of the hour, not because of distrust about future delivery but because India as an independent Power wants to play, if it is at all possible, a decisive part in favour of the Allies. India today is becoming progressively hostile to the Allied Powers notwithstanding their ability to command recruits and the like. What is wanted is an enthusiastic response from a free and willing India. Many of us think that that is the indispensable condition of the success of Allied arms.

Q. 2. What should be the nature of the provisional government and who should be the possible members?

A. It is difficult to foresee what will happen when India is declared free but I imagine that any provisional government to be stable in the absence of outside imposition can only be by the willing consent of different popular parties. This willing consent is impossible so long as the third party is present to look up to for favours. The Congress President has already suggested that the Government may simultaneously with the declaration of independence deliver their power to any of the organized popular parties including the Muslim League and the Congress. It will be up to the deliverer to compose with the remaining parties in order to secure stability, because in free India Government must depend wholly upon the willing consent of the people. It should be remembered that all the time that free India Government is functioning, the Allied troops will carry on their operations without let or hindrance, subject to the treaty that will be negotiated between free India Government and the Allied Powers.

Q. 3. How do you hope to avert anarchy during the transitional period?

A. The anarchy is automatically averted if a provisional Government is formed, which will be the case under the Congress president's suggestion.

Q. 4. Will you accept a joint guarantee by the Socialist and Liberal parties of England for Indian independence?

A. Reply to this is contained in reply to the first.



150. 'Glaring Misstatements by Sir S. Cripps': Maulana Azad's Reply
The Times of India, 29 July 1942.

New Delhi, July 27

'I have carefully watched the reactions to the Working Committee's resolution and have come to the conclusion that in their anxiety to find fault with the Congress, adverse critics have completely ignored the frank analysis of the political situation and constructive proposals and only concentrated on the last paragraph which hints at the consequences of the failure to take timely steps' said Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, in a statement at a Press conference this evening.

He added: 'In doing so they have overreached themselves by drawing a lurid picture of anarchy and chaos particularly pleasing to those who would invade India. It is the height of unwisdom to use so share a double-edged weapon, for, while it is intended to affect public opinion in America and China, it supplies the Axis propagandists with the very material they would wish for.

'Sir Stafford Cripps's broadcast to America marks the climax of this propaganda. He has studiously avoided the Working Committee's resolution, because it contains a complete answer to his entire argument. He has selected for his basis a phrase or two from Mr. Gandhi's writings torn out of their context. Mr. Gandhi will take care of these misrepresentations. But Sir Stafford Cripps has either misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted the Congress point of view.

'Commenting on the failure of the Cripps' negotiation the Working Committee has said that it has resulted in a sense of frustration and a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain. The Committee has expressed its anxiety to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, and it has desired to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.

'The Committee's much criticized resolution says: "The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom." On the withdrawal of British rule from India the resolution visualizes a "provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India."

'It further says: "Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the co-operation of the two countries as Allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the peoples' united will and strength behind it."

'In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increased pressure on China by the Japanese or any other group associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is, therefore, agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.'

'How all this can be interpreted by sir Stafford Cripps as a demand for "walking out of India leaving this country without any constitutional form of Government and with no organized administration" passes one's comprehension. In fact, what is visualized in this resolution is a

stable provisional government as the immediate result. Another glaring misstatement which he has permitted himself to broadcast to America is extremely disingenuous. Describing the form of government which he offered to representative Indian political leaders, he calls the Viceroy's Executive Council "a body of ministers like those who advise your President."

"This analogy is as totally misleading as that other of the national cabinet with which Sir Stafford Cripps tried to mislead India.

"Those who are trying to make out that the demand for India's independence is unreasonable in the midst of a war may pause to consider that free India offers to throw her entire weight on the side of the Allies. Surely the recognition and guarantee of Egypt's independence did not present any difficulty in the way of the Allies even though Egypt has remained neutral. But free India is committed to full participation in the United Nations' fight for freedom and peace of the world.

"The Congress has no illusion about the extent of the moral support which India's demand for independence may receive from those who have so far been loud in their professions of sympathy. Ultimately India will have to depend entirely on such strength as she possesses for achieving her goal."

Maulana Azad added: "I regard the Working Committee's resolution as an appeal to the United Nations to intervene on behalf of India. This is the first occasion in the history of the Congress that such an appeal has been made. The matter is no longer one between India and England but between India and the United Nations as the latter want to make India their operational base. India's right to independence is not subject to negotiation. It is a fundamental principle. No change which is asked for will in any way affect the interests of the United Nations. In fact what is asked for guarantees India's full weight and support on behalf of the United Nations in the interests of the larger cause and the defence of India."

.... Maulana Azad left for Calcutta this morning.

151. Sir Sikandar's Offer to Congress

The Bombay Chronicle, 29 July 1942.

Lahore, July 28

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, it is authoritatively learnt, is doing his best to persuade the Congress High Command to avoid conflict with the British Government at this critical juncture, but to negotiate for a National Government in the centre....

152. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to T.B. Saprú, 29 July 1942¹

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 343-4.

DEAR Dr. SAPRU,

Nothing from your pen I can possibly disregard. If I had the slightest faith in a Round Table Conference when British authority reigns supreme, I would accept your proposal. You know what happened when Sir Sankaran Nair presided, when I presided in Delhi—was it not?—and in London when I was thrust into the chair. Of course you are at liberty to say that each time the fault was mine. My interpretation is different. The result is the same. I am not the fit person for such a task. But if you have faith and you call it, I shall be at your service. You at

least will acquit me of haste or pride. I have seen nothing impossible of acceptance in my or, rather, now, the

Congress demand.

I hope you have got rid of all your illness.

Yours sincerely,

M.K. GANDHI

¹ Gandhi-Sapru Papers. Courtesy: National Library, Calcutta. Also G.N. 7578.

153. Private and Personal Note from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, 28 July 1942, about Expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Congress's 'Uneasiness of Mind', Maulana Azad's Statement, and Ways of Paying Honour to M.K. Gandhi's Memory on His Death
TOP, 1942-7, Vol. 2, *Quit India*, 30 April-21 September 1942, pp. 485-9.

.... As I write I have almost completed my Council, for Ambedkar, Usman and Srivastava have all joined, and I now await only Jogendra Singh (who is taking over on the 29th) and sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar (who is taking over about the 5th). I should thus have a full team before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. on the 7th August, and there may well be some little value in the fact that the important discussions that are now going on about policy towards Congress, and possibly the decision to arrest Gandhi, &c., fall to be conducted with a Council entirely non-official save for the Chief and myself, and entirely Indian save for the Chief, myself and Benthall. Maxwell has been seedy and is likely to be out of action for the best part of a month, and Raisman is of course in London.

2. Broadly speaking, as I write, I do not think that things are going too badly for us. Congress continue to have a thoroughly bad Press in the United States and at home, and they are very conscious of it. They are coming in too for a great deal of rather sharp criticism here, and the latest utterances of their spokesmen seem to me to suggest a certain uneasiness of mind. Unfortunately that uneasiness of mind does not appear to exist (or does not manifest itself) in the one quarter in which it matters, viz. the Mahatma, and I am sure that we should make a great mistake if we were to underestimate the amount of trouble he can give us, or the amount of following which he may look for. His banner is bound to attract very substantial numbers of people, even if some of them are not too convinced of the merits of the case; and if things come to a show-down and his very clear indications that he proposes to consider using the device of a fast prove prophetic, we shall unquestionably have a strong reaction of sympathy for him here, and I have little doubt a reaction which may have to be reckoned with in the United States and possibly at home. And Congress have unfortunately got themselves into so tight a jam that I do not see much chance for them to get out without loss of face, though the suggestion, which has been made by the Congress chief whip, Mr. Satya Narayan Sinha, to the Press yesterday, that a decision might well await the assembly of the newly-elected A.I.C.C. three months hence, gives them a method of escape, if they want to avail themselves of it.

3. In think I have mentioned in earlier letter that I suspected that what the Mahatma was after was to work on the nerves of people at home and in the United States in the hope that

he might get pressure brought to bear by the United Nations or the like, and the correctness of that view seems to be justified by Kalam Azad's appeal of yesterday. I am told by the *Times* correspondent, who was present, that the Maulana showed slight signs of wishing to retain a free hand as regards even the United Nations, and was disposed to claim that the Congress addressed its observations to nobody, neither to great Britain nor the United States, nor any one else, though it would be quite ready to *consider* anything that came from the United Nations.... I was interested to see that the Maulana, with much wisdom, took his stand on the resolution of the Working Committee and not on the interpretation of that resolution, or the comments on it, which Gandhi has let us have in such an abundant measure!...

10. Thank you so much for your telegram about Cripps' broadcast. As it turned out it was, I think, a very good one, and it has been extremely unpalatable to the Congress here. But you will I know not have misunderstood my anxiety, given the extent to which Cripps' *obiter dicta* continue to crop up at every point, to make sure that he was not going to say something about conventions, the building of Cabinets or the like, which would have added further fuel to the flames out here....

16. You will remember that we had some correspondence at the beginning of the year (arising out of a reference made to me by Twynam¹) as to the steps to be taken by way of paying honour to Gandhi's memory on his death. You left the decision to me, and I thought on the whole that the best thing would be to see how the situation developed. I therefore sent Twynam no reply at the time. I thought it well to revive the issue with him last month, and you will have had copies of my letter to him of 8th June and of his reply of 19th June. As you will see Twynam is still disposed in certain circumstances to half-mast the flag and to close offices. I have been through the whole business again in some detail. In the result I have reached the conclusion that the wise course would be in no circumstances to half-mast flags, but to leave Twynam discretion to close offices if Gandhi dies when he is not in custody or actively engaged in operations against us should a request be made to the Governor for offices to be closed.... I do not propose to issue any general instruction. The matter will be of acute interest primarily in the Central Provinces.

¹ Sir Henry Twynam, Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar.

154. Road Clear for Negotiations: Maulana Azad's Frank Statement Brings Hope

The Bombay Chronicle, 29 July 1942.

New Delhi, July 28

A distinctly hopeful atmosphere prevails in New Delhi today—partly by reason of frank and conciliatory statements made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to the Press Conference yesterday, which has created a good impression on American correspondents and partly by reason of President Roosevelt's decision to send Mr. Wendell Wilkie to India. Mr. Wilkie is expected to deal with Mahatma Gandhi and Congress leaders direct and try to find an immediate solution.

As Maulana Azad has already declared that if India's right to independence is recognized by an immediate declaration, the Congress was quite prepared to consider any suggestion by the United Nations for the interim period, the way is regarded as clear for negotiations.

Political circles attach no serious importance to Sir Stafford Cripps' broadcast which is merely intended for propaganda purposes and does not denote any final decision on the part of British Government. It is recognised that no decision in Indian policy can be taken without Washington's consent.

155. Mass Scale Programme of Congress: Vallabhbhai Patel Criticizes Sir Stafford Cripps

The Tribune, 29 July 1942.

Ahmedabad, July 28

'The Congress Working Committee has decided to launch a mass struggle with great anguish. For three years, the Congress followed the policy of non-embarrassment, which led the British Government to offer the Cripps proposals, which Mahatma Gandhi refused to consider at the very first glance, but the Congress Working Committee considered them for fifteen days, at the end of which Sir Stafford Cripps changed his mind and laid the blame on the Congress Working Committee', declared Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing a crowded meeting of college students this afternoon.

Sardar Patel said that, during the course of negotiations, Sir Stafford Cripps gave out that the National Government in India would be of the type of the British Cabinet, but subsequently, he had to withdraw that proposal. He came to India to create American public opinion in favour of England.

Proceeding, Sardar Patel said that, after the failure of the Cripps mission, the Congress Working Committee approached Mahatma Gandhi, although it had difference of opinion with him. It withdrew the Poona offer which offered men and materials to Britain in war, if real National Government were established in India and accepted the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi for a non-violent struggle. There was now scope for negotiations on the question of the independence of India. The entire programme which the Congress had carried out during the last twenty years would be carried out on a mass scale, without any restriction.

156. C. Rajagopalachari's Talks with M.K. Gandhi

The Tribune, 29 July 1942.

Wardhaganj, July 28

Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar had prolonged talks with Mahatma Gandhi this afternoon, it is learnt, about the present political situation, with a special reference to Mahatma Gandhi's recent writings and his contemplated movement.

The talks are being resumed tomorrow.

157. Move Fatal to Independence: Liberals Appeal to Sink Differences

The Bombay Chronicle, 29 July 1942.

Bombay, July 28

At a meeting of the Council of the Western India National Liberal Association held on Monday evening under the chairmanship of Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, the following resolution was passed:-

'The Council of the Western India National Liberal Association views with grave apprehension and is entirely opposed to the move of the Congress executive to start mass civil disobedience.

'Such movement will inevitably lead to lawlessness, internal disturbances and communal clashes in the country at a time when India is in great peril of invasion by the Axis powers.

'The threatened movement will positively embarrass and weaken the war effort of the United Nations and will make India an easy prey to foreign aggression.

'However grave our differences with the British Government are, under present war conditions, it is highly detrimental to the safety and prospects of independence of this country to take so disruptive a step as the Congress contemplates.

'The Council has no hesitation in condemning the threatened movement and appeals to the people of this country and leaders of all parties outside the Congress not to countenance it in any matter.

'It further appeals to all communities and political parties in the country to sink their differences and unite in repelling aggression and when the war is won, in demanding and getting independence for the country.'

158. Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, 29 July 1942, about the CWC Resolution

TOP, Vol. 2, *Quit India*, 30 April–21 September 1942, pp. 497–8.

.... The Congress Party Working Committee has adopted, subject to ratification by the All-India Committee, a resolution demanding the immediate withdrawal of British rule from India and threatening a mass movement if the demand is not conceded.

The purpose of His Majesty's Government with regard to the constitutional future of India was made clear in the Draft Declaration which Sir Stafford Cripps was authorized to offer on behalf of His Majesty's Government. It proved impossible to secure the support of the principal elements of India's national life for the specific proposals in that Declaration, and the draft was accordingly withdrawn. Nevertheless His Majesty's Government stand firmly by the broad intention of their offer.

The present demand of Congress completely ignores the far-reaching offer and would, if conceded, bring about a complete and abrupt dislocation of the vast and complicated machinery of government of India. This at a time when in Russia, China, Libya and other theatres of war the situation calls for the undivided energy, co-operation and concentration of the resources of all the Allied Powers. No greater disservice to the cause for which the United Nations are fighting can be imagined, and men of goodwill everywhere must refuse to envisage such a catastrophic development in one of the most vital theatres of war.

His Majesty's Government while reiterating their resolve to give the fullest opportunity for the attainment by India of complete self-government cannot but solemnly warn all those who stand behind the policy adumbrated by the Working Committee of Congress that the Government of India will not flinch from their duty to take every possible step to meet the situation. The United Nations have bent themselves to the task of fighting the menace which overhangs freedom and civilization. In this crisis and in the future after the war India had a great part to play and it is the earnest hope of His Majesty's Government that the Indian people will lend no countenance to a movement fraught with such disastrous consequences but will, on the contrary, throw their all into the struggle against the common enemies of mankind.

159. Note by Secretary of State of Interview with US Ambassador to Britain, John Winant, 29 July 1942

TOP, Vol. 2, *Quit India*, 30 April–21 September 1942, pp. 498–9.

I explained to the Ambassador that the real underlying motive of Mr. Gandhi's movement was to create in connection with mass civil disobedience an emotional atmosphere which would cause Indian nationalists generally, and even sympathizers outside India, to forget their previous criticisms of the Congress blunder in rejecting the Cripps proposals and rally them to some demand that the British Government should give way to Congress. All the rest of the resolution, I pointed out, was eye-wash. No one could believe, least of all the framers of the resolution, that the disappearance of British rule would lead to a sudden healing of internal dissensions in India and to the formation of a provisional Government whose authority would be respected by India as a whole. On the contrary, if by going out we created such a gap, the only result would be that existing Governments such as e.g. the Governments of the States or of the Punjab, would regard themselves as free from any superior authority and act accordingly, with the most disastrous consequences to the general unity of India and above all to the war effort. As for the passages in the resolution referring to India's desire to help the United Nations, they were simply put in to salve Nehru's conscience while in fact he was following in the train of Gandhi, who was entirely indifferent either to what happened in India or what happened to the Allied cause.

As for the proposed movement itself, I was not without hopes that the volume of criticism directed against it from every quarter in India and outside might lead to the resolution not being passed or at any rate postponed when Congress met in August. It was from that point of view that the Government of India had wisely refrained from taking any drastic steps on the action of the Working Committee, steps which would certainly have been taken in this country. On the other hand, if the Congress leaders got their way and passed their resolution and it became clear that a really formidable movement was being organized, the Government would have to act promptly and firmly. I explained, however, that by 'formidable' was meant something that might cause considerable embarrassment to the police, stoppage of traffic in some of the cities, etc., but certainly not anything that would directly interfere with the war effort. The classes that recruited to the army were entirely indifferent to Congress. Nor would such a movement enlist any serious support either among munition workers or railways or the docks, where to the best of my belief the more advanced sections of workers were much more interested in fighting Fascism and Nazism than in playing the Congress game.

160. Vallabhbhai Patel: Struggle Will Be Short and Swift; No Indian to Remain Aloof; Movement Will Be Finished Within a Week

The Tribune, 30 July 1942.

Ahmedabad, July 29

'Mahatma Gandhi's last struggle will be short and swift, and will be finished within a week', declared Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing an open-air meeting of students this evening on the occasion of the inauguration of the National Students' Union.

He said that no Indian would remain aloof from the coming struggle, which would be unique of its type. Students would leave their studies and join it. There were divisions among

the student world of India, but they should be bridged. Attempts were being made by the third party to divide Indians, but the Congress was prepared to hand over the administration of the country to Muslims, if it was offered to them....

.... It would be seen said Sardar Patel, how many people were behind the Congress when Mahatma Gandhi launched the struggle after the conclusion of the meeting of the A.I.C.C. at Bombay. The British and the American press was perturbed as it was never before perturbed. The Congress was asked to wait till the conclusion of the war when India would be freed. If India was really to be freed after the war, why was she not freed before the war? The promises given during the last war were not fulfilled and India was given the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh for her unstinted help. The Congress had become wiser by experience, and wanted freedom for defending India against foreign aggression which was said to be imminent.

161. M.S. Aney's Plea for Provisional Government

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 July 1942.

Yeotmal, July 29

'It is my firm belief that the two major political parties committed a mistake in rejecting the Cripps proposals admittedly defective as they were', said the Hon. Mr. M.S. Aney, Overseas Member of the Viceroy's Council, addressing a meeting here. 'In my view the main principles underlying the reforms in the Cripps proposals were unexceptionable and the British Government may be taken as irrevocably committed to their fulfillment, partly during the period of the war and partly at the end of it.'

Aney's Hope

Referring to the latest resolution of the Congress Working Committee, the Hon. Mr. Aney hoped that it would be altered by the A.I.C.C. in the light of opinions expressed on it in this country and outside. 'What is needed' he said 'is a common platform for all important parties in the country and a common demand. I appeal with all the earnestness I command to Mahatma Gandhi to convene a conference of representatives of all important parties in the country and prepare a scheme acceptable to all.'

'Success achieved in this direction at the present juncture would to my mind, prove the capacity of the Congress to form a Provisional Government at which it aims on the withdrawal of British power from India.'

Mr. Aney voiced his conviction that India could expect to be free only if the Allies succeed in winning the war....

162. Ahrars Pledge Support to Congress

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 July 1942.

Raja Gulzar Khan, President of the Provincial Majlis-e-Ahrar-Islam, Bombay Presidency, has issued the following statement:-

'When all hopes of an amicable settlement and negotiation have frustrated about the Indian political situation and the country is facing a grave peril. The National Congress has after careful consideration, finally decided to lead the country to attain the goal by throwing

away the foreign yoke. All organizations are thinking over the situation very seriously at this critical juncture to join hands with the Congress in its new move.

‘I have consulted various zealous Ahrar workers and Ahrar minded friends in the Province about it, because it will be ridiculously against the principles of the Independence Pledge, that Ahrars should remain watching the affairs without actively participating in it. All workers and prominent members have assured me of their fullest co-operation in the forthcoming campaign which Gandhiji has to launch to attain freedom. I appreciate the Ahrar workers sentiments and I am sure that Ahrars who have always fought shoulder to shoulder with the Congress will not lag behind in this last struggle too.

‘I am convening the meeting of the working committee very shortly for further discussions and to inform and suggest the central Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam to participate in this move.

163. Khaksar Chief’s Appeal to Congress: Fortnightly Report for Madras for the Second Half of July 1942

NAI.

Madras, July 29

Allama Mashriqi has sent the following telegram to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders:-

‘My honest opinion is that Civil Disobedience is a little premature. First concede wholeheartedly and with a hand-shake to the Muslim League the theoretical Pakistan. Thereafter unitedly make a demand of ‘Quit India’. If refused start total disobedience. Think profoundly judging the consequences. The country is emasculated and in the midst of a war, and is unprepared. A real dramatic and vitalizing incentive is necessary for the successful termination of the struggle.’

164. Choice before Communists

The Bombay Chronicle, 30 July 1942.

Allahabad, July 28

That Communist Members of the Congress, who are holding any positions in Congress executive will have to resign was indicated by a responsible official of the Congress Working Committee here.

It was pointed out that the Communist members cannot carry on propaganda against the official policy of the Congress and at the same time remain on executive bodies of the Congress.

They will have to resign from these bodies, if they want to persist in anti-Congress activities.

One member of the A.I.C.C. had given notice of a resolution to the effect that Congressmen should resign from the membership of the local bodies and Legislatures.



165. From Rajkumari Amrit Kaur to Jawaharlal Nehru, 31 July 1942,
Wishing Him God Speed on His Way to Bombay
Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Part 1, Vol. 2, NMML.

My dear J.N.,

Just a few lines to wish you God speed on your way to Bombay. I had hoped to be there but am now joining Bapu at Sevagram on his return from Bombay.

I plead with you again for delaying action until the tide of war is not so dead against the United Nations as today. They have neither eyes to see nor ears to hear nor hearts to understand the simplest proposition today. Having waited all these long years will a few months longer (say three or four months) hurt? And there is the probability—too awful to contemplate—of a fast by Bapu. Do try to prevent that at all costs. If precipitate action is taken or we lose we shall be very much worse off than today. And there is nothing to prevent our organizing Indian defence vs aggression today all over the country and preparing the masses for the later struggle if these people do not see daylight by then.

Best love—

Yours ever

Amrit

166. Enrolment of Congress Workers Has Just Begun: Letter from
Secretary, Utkal Provincial Congress Committee, to General
Secretary, AICC, 31 July 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-14/1942-6, NMML.

Dear Friend,

Ref—your Circular No.14 dated 25.7.42 regarding payment of our Provincial quota to the A.I.C.C.

I beg to submit that it is known to you that this P.C.C. has no reserve funds. Due to Satyagraha movement from November 1940 to December 1941 very few Congress members were enrolled in this Province during the years 1940 and 1941 and the very little amount realized as Congress membership fees were hardly enough to meet the daily running expenses of the Congress Committees of this Province.

Although the Working Committee extended the time of enrolment of Congress members upto end of June 1942, we could not enroll Congress members upto the end of March 1942 as almost all our workers were engaged in the Baliguda–Khondamals bye-election for the Orissa Legislative Assembly held in the 3rd week of March 1942.

Just after that when the workers were about to move to enroll Congress members from the beginning of April an Enemy Naval engagement near the Orissa coast on the 6th of April 1942 upset all our plans for enrolment. People began to run hither and thither each thinking his residence unsafe. People of one village or town shifted to other villages or towns with hardly sufficient provisions for their living, with the idea that the particular village or town was in danger. Thus a chaotic condition prevailed throughout the Province, to combat which we had to engage all our agencies suspending all our normal works. Now as a result of the strenuous

effort of our workers the confusion is almost over and people are beginning to return to their native places. Thus our workers are just beginning to enroll Congress members the fees for which we expect to receive by the 1st week of September next, the last date of enrolment having been further extended upto the end of August 1942.

Under the circumstances I pray that you will kindly allow us time to pay our Provincial quota to the A.I.C.C. till the end of September 1942 and allow our representatives to the A.I.C.C. to attend the forthcoming meeting of that body in Bombay.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Krishna Chandra Mahapatra
For Secretary

167. Britain Stands Firmly by Sir Stafford Cripps's Offer: Congress
Threat to Be Met Unflinchingly

The Times of India, 31 July 1942.

London, July 30

The British Government's attitude to the threat of a 'mass movement' in India by the Congress Party Working Committee was clearly defined in the House of Commons today by Mr. L.S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India.

Answering Mr. Ammon, Mr. Amery declared that the Government of India would not flinch from their duty to take every possible measure to meet the situation resulting from the policy outlined by the Congress.

India, Mr. Amery said, had a great part to play in the present crisis and in the future, and the British government earnestly hoped that the Indian people would not support a movement fraught with disastrous consequences.

Mr. Amery made it clear that the British Government still stood firmly by the broad intention of their offer as embodied in the Cripps proposals.

168. Congress Should Not Resort to a Mass Movement: Letter from
N.R. Chaudhuri, Vice President, Municipal Committee, Warud,
Berar, to the Secretary, AICC, 1 August 1942
AICC Papers, F. No. P-14/1942, NMML.

Dear Sir,

To-day the 1st of August 1942 at 8 P.M. there was a public meeting of the citizens of Warud Town of the Morsi Taluq Distt. Amraoti, Berar under my presidentship. There was a large audience of about 4 hundred people mostly agriculturists had assembled. The present situation was discussed. Mr. Amritkar Pleader of Morsi spoke on the subject. His speech lasted for about 2 hours in which he described the present situation (economic, social and political) due to war at length. It was pointed out how the intended movement of the Congress of mass Civil Disobedience would invite the enemy into the country and how the people especially the agriculturists would be seriously ruined. This is not the time to launch such a movement which would involve serious differences among different communities leading to anarchy. Other

speakers also spoke on the necessity of the Congress of not resorting to such a drastic step. On the authority given to me I am herewith forwarding a resolution passed by the meeting for your consideration and placing the same before the meeting of All India Congress Committee. I strongly hope that the all India Congress Committee will in the interest of the country refrain from adopting the programme of mass civil disobedience.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

For President of the meeting

169. M.A. Jinnah's Statement to Foreign Press: M.K. Gandhi's
'Quit India' Slogan—'It Is a Gambler's Last Throw'
The Tribune, 1 August 1942.

Bombay, July 31

In the course of a statement to the foreign press, Mr. M.A. Jinnah says:-

The latest decision of the Congress Working committee on July 14, 1942 resolving to launch mass movement if the British do not immediately withdraw from India is the culminating point to the policy and programme of Mr. Gandhi and his Hindu Congress of blackmailing the British and coercing them to concede to establish a system of Government and transfer to that Government which would establish Hindu Raj immediately under the aegis of the British bayonet and thereby throwing the Muslims and other minorities and interests at the mercy of the Congress Raj....

170. M.K. Gandhi's Instructions to Ashram Inmates, 1 August 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 349.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow. I cannot say what will happen. But I hope to be back by August 11, and in any case not later than August 13. Those who are in the Ashram should know that anything can befall them. It is possible that Government may even stop the supply of our food. Only those therefore should stay here who are ready to live even on leaves. The rest should leave. It will be a matter of shame for us if they leave after the trouble.

171. Reactions to Mirabehn's Article on Orissa: DO from W.H. Lewis,
Governor, Orissa, 2 August 1942, to Lord Linlithgow
GOI Home Political File No. 4/4/1942, NAI.

In Your Excellency's telegram No. 2137 S of the 20th July you drew my attention to Miss Slade's article on Orissa in the *Harijan* of the 11th July and emphasized the need to kill at once any allegation that can be turned to our disadvantage by Congress and its supporters. You accordingly asked me to consider the issue of a reasoned statement by my Government traversing ... the allegations made in Miss Slade's article.

2. Subsequently in the second paragraph of your letter to me of the 18th July you again mentioned Miss Slade's article and told me that she had seen Laithwaite and General Hartley,

and had made a great deal of play with the alleged extreme anti-British feeling in Orissa and with the extent to which operational preparations and denial policy have been responsible for it. Your Excellency recognized that her representations required to be received with caution, and mentioned again the need to nail misrepresentations to the wall where we can do so....

6. I share the opinion that the Provincial Government should not issue a reply. But in her article Miss Slade has attempted to construct a formidable indictment of Government policy and action in Orissa in the matter of defence measures and I take this opportunity to put the general position to Your Excellency in what will, I hope, be a more correct perspective than is seen in the distorted exaggerations of Miss Slade's article. She takes admitted facts and then twists them to suit the political purpose of the party of which she is an adherent....

7. An examination of Miss Slade's article shows that it is constructed on the following lines. It begins by striking the note of 'tragedy perpetrated by the so-called protecting Government on its own subjects.' It asserts the personal knowledge on which the indictment is based. It then proceeds to deal with the hardships to which the local population is exposed. These are recounted verbatim in the following order: (1) The immobilization of boats, (2) the closure of canals, (3) the helplessness of the people who are not permitted to organize themselves for their own protection.

Having taken these three points (and tried to make the most of them), Miss Slade then reaches the main tragedy (to use her description) that is, the outbreak of the Cochin and Travancore labourers and their attack on the Chaudwar village. That incident occupies the rest of her article. It is in fact the peg on which her article is hung....

172. Question Box: World Federation, on or before 2 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 350–2.

World Federation

Q. Instead of striving for India's freedom why would you not strive for a far greater and nobler end—world federation? Surely that will automatically include India's freedom as the greater includes the less.

A. There is an obvious fallacy in this question. Federation is undoubtedly a greater and nobler end for free nations. It is a greater and nobler end for them to strive to promote federation than be selfcentred, seeking only to preserve their own freedom. They are finding it difficult if not impossible for individuals to retain freedom without a combination. It has become a necessity while the war lasts and it would be good if they voluntarily pledge themselves now, to remain united even after the war. Defeat of any one member should make no difference. The survivors will not rest content till the defeated member is avenged. Still this won't be a world federation. It would be a mere defensive alliance between a certain combination. The very first step to a world federation is to recognize the freedom of conquered and exploited nations. Thus, India and Africa have to be freed. The second step would be to announce to and assure the aggressor powers, in the present instance, the Axis powers, that immediately the war ends, they will be recognized as members of the world federation in the same sense as the Allies. This presupposes an agreement among the members of the world federation as to the irreducible fundamentals. If this is not forthcoming, the federation will fall to pieces under the slightest strain. Therefore it has to come about voluntarily. I suggest that non-violence is

the basis of voluntariness. It is because of all the nations of the world India is the one nation which has a message, however limited and crude it may be, in that direction that it must have immediate freedom to enable it to play its part. You may not quote against me Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I know that they do not hold the view I hold on non-violence. When India gets her freedom the probability is that I shall no longer be wanted by any party and everybody would be war-mad. Nevertheless there will be, I am quite sure, a respectable number of votaries of nonviolence who will make their contribution. But this subject is not germane to the question. Moreover, I am discussing that aspect more fully elsewhere. I hope you will agree with me that India, in seeking first to be free, is not retarding federation. It wants her freedom for the sake of the nations in distress, especially China and Russia and for the whole of humanity—in your language world federation. You will also, I hope, see that no universal federation is possible without India becoming free now. It would be an earnest too of the Allied declarations.

What about Nepal?

Q. When India is free will she treat Nepal as an independent country that she is now or will she be annexed to free India?

A. If I know India's mind at all, having tasted the bitter fruit of dependence, she will not want to annex or steal any country. She can have no imperial ambition. Nepal therefore will be an honoured and independent neighbour. I am not sure that Nepal is as independent as you think it is. But I do not know enough of Nepal to challenge your statement. I hope that you are wholly right.

173. An Appropriate Question (on the Nature of the Proposed Indian Government), 2 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 354–5.

I take the following from *The Hindu*:

The Manchester Guardian, in an editorial commenting on the Wardha resolution, says that the resolution suggested that if Britain would immediately withdraw, India would help her and the Allies to 'resist aggression'. In India, as here, it is being asked what is meant by 'resistance'.

Would it be armed resistance or would it be 'resistance' of the kind which Mr. Gandhi has always advocated—non-violent non-co-operation? The text of the resolution ought to settle the question, but it does not. Pandit Nehru and some other Congress leaders have said that they themselves believe in offering armed resistance, provided that Britain makes the necessary political concessions. But Mr. Gandhi's belief is that Indians would most effectively 'resist' Japan and any other aggressor by pure non-violence. How is Britain to know what sort of 'resistance' the proposed Indian Government would organize, concludes the Manchester Guardian.

This is a good question. But who can speak for the proposed Indian Government? It must be clear that it won't be Congress Government; nor will it be Hindu Mahasabha Government, nor Muslim League Government. It will be all-India Government. It will be a government not backed by any military power unless the so-called military classes seize the opportunity and overawe the populace and declare themselves the Government as Franco has done. If they play the game then the proposed government would be a government though provisional in the first instance, broad-based upon the will of the people. Let us assume that the military-minded

persons being without the backing of the powerful British arms will think [it] wise not to seize power. The popular Government to be must represent Parsis, Jews, Indian Christians, Muslims and Hindus not as separate religious groups but as Indians. The vast majority won't be believers in non-violence. The Congress does not believe in non-violence as a creed. Very few go to the extreme length I do as the Manchester Guardian properly puts it. The Maulana and Pandit Nehru believe in offering armed resistance. And, I may add, so do many Congressmen.

Therefore, whether in the country as a whole or in the Congress, I shall be in a hopeless minority. But for me even if I find myself in a minority of one my course is clear. My non-violence is on its trial. I hope I shall come out unscathed through the ordeal. My faith in its efficacy is unflinching. If I could turn India, Great Britain, America and the rest of the world, including the Axis Powers, in the direction of non-violence I should do so. But that feat mere human effort cannot accomplish. That is in God's hands. For me, 'I can but do or die.' Surely the Manchester Guardian does not fear the real article, genuine non-violence. Nobody does nor need.

174. No More Jail-going This Time: Rajendra Prasad's Warning:
Satyagrahis May Have to Face Shooting Even

The Sunday Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2 August 1942.

Patna, July 31

The no-rent campaign of Bardoli, the last individual civil disobedience movement all pale into insignificance before this one—the decision of the Congress to use all its non-violent strength if the 'Quit India' demand is not conceded by the British Government, observed Dr. Rajendra Prasad addressing an emergent meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee at Sadaquat Ashram.

Worst Repression Envisaged

Explaining the implications of the present Wardha resolution Dr. Prasad emphasized that it was not going to be mere jail-going this time. It was going to be more drastic, calling for the worst repression—shooting, bombing, confiscation of property, all were possible. Congressmen, therefore, had to join the movement fully conscious that they might be exposed to all these.

The new plan of action included all forms of Satyagraha based on pure non-violence and this was going to be the last struggle for the independence of India. They could face all the armed might of the world with non-violence, the greatest weapon in the armoury of Satyagraha, he declared....

Question of Unity

Britain, he proceeded, had evaded their demand so far on the plea that she could not transfer power to Indian hands as there was no unity in India. The Congress also had been believing that without this unity India could not attain her goal.

But the Congress had now come to the conclusion that there could be no unity until British power disappeared. The foreign element in the body-politic of the country created such new problems that they proved difficult of solution. Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, was now of the definite opinion that there could be no unity in India without Swaraj, though formerly he held

the opposite view. This opinion was the result of bitter experience and the outcome of the Cripps Mission....

175. 'No Time to Fritter Away Resources': N.C. Kelkar Upholds 'Old Congress', Condemns Party Politics

The Sunday Chronicle, 2 August 1942.

Poona, July 31

'This is a time when political India cannot afford to fritter away its resources of strength by working through different political parties.

There should be a single organization and the organization should be the old Congress in which were to be found moderates and extremists, Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs and Parsees and Christians working side by side' said Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates to the second conference of the All India Nationalist League which commenced here to-day.

Criticising the proposed method of the Congress viz. Satyagraha, the speaker said that it was inadequate and added that it was one-sided and could be easily met by Government by providing as twice before enough accommodation for the Satyagrahis in jail.

The objective also of the movement was vague. Further it would complicate matters, already unsatisfactory, by resulting in communal and other disturbances.

The other method of sending men to the army and depending on them on their return to contribute to the pressure of public opinion on Government for surrendering political power to the Indian people would be more helpful.

176. Wardha Resolution to Be Reconsidered?

The Sunday Chronicle, 2 August 1942.

Cawnpore, August 1

Pandit Balkrishna Sharma, member of the Executive Council of the United Provinces Congress Committee and member of the All India Congress Committee, has given notice of a resolution for the forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Bombay recommending to the A.I.C.C. to advise the Congress Working Committee to reconsider the Wardha resolution in regard to the immediate launching of any movement in the country.

177. Note on Letter from Horace Alexander to M.K. Gandhi,
3 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 361-2.

This is a letter from a well-known English friend, who is also one of the best English friends India has. It demands as gentle and genuine an answer as his letter is gentle and genuine. I believe every word of what he says about British emotion. Agatha Harrison sends me cable after cable revealing her deep pain over what I am doing and the Congress is doing. And Agatha Harrison, weak in body though she is, is wearing herself out in removing the cobwebs of misunderstanding. She sees every responsible English statesman who will see her (and let

me admit that they all see her) and pleads for India's cause. But she is up against a blind wall. I seem to have lost the credit that I thought I used to enjoy in those circles. It is most difficult to repair a loss for which there is no accountable reason that the loser can see. For the moment I must content myself with repetition of assurances and protestations of good faith. I would not lose credit even for entrance into heaven. But there are moments when it becomes necessary to risk (not to incur) the loss of credit for the sake of the creditor himself. I began my experiments in non-co-operation with the members of my family. I had no occasion to regret the adventure, for the risks were run for their sakes as they themselves discovered, some soon and some late. Love and truth are as gentle as they are sometimes hard beyond endurance.

I have passed many sleepless nights to discover the various ways of ending the struggle with the least commotion. But I saw that some form of conflict was inevitable to bring home the truth to the British mind. I have no doubt that events would show that I was right, that I acted in the spirit of pure friendship. British authority would deal summarily with the movement. The sufferings will be all on the side of the people. True, but in the end Britain will lose in the moral fibre. But to let her continue as she is doing is to make her bankrupt and, perhaps, lose the battle, whereas the movement, which I have advised the Congress to take up, is designed to prevent bankruptcy and enable Great Britain to acquire a moral height which must secure victory for her and her Allies. There is no claim here for philanthropy.

The fact stands and nobody has ever denied it that by this movement India stands to gain her goal of independence. But this is irrelevant here. What is relevant here is the fundamental fact that the movement is designed to help Britain in spite of herself. This is a very big, almost arrogant claim. I am not ashamed to advance it because it comes from an agonized heart. Time alone will show the truth or falsehood of the claim. I have no doubt as to the verdict. For the testimony of reason may be wrong, but of the heart never.

178. M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Horace Alexander, Birla House, Bombay,
3 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 362-3.

My dear Horace,

I read your touching letter for the second time in the train. And I decided to print it without giving your name and without the prefatory part. If possible I shall enclose a copy of my note on it. I wrote it then and there on the train. I could not do better than that. Often I have found that silence is more eloquent than speech and action the best of all. But as I have been writing and explaining, I thought I must not make an exception in this case. Moreover your letter has invited an answer.

If there is anything more you think I should do, I am ever ready. Do tell me fully and frankly; no stone should be left unturned to remove misunderstandings. My grave misgiving is that those who are in authority do not want to part with India. With them it seems that to lose India is to lose the battle. It is terrible if it is true. In my opinion to keep India as a possession is to lose the battle. Help me to solve my doubt which I have expressed in the columns of *Harijan*.

HORACE ALEXANDER
BUCHANAN'S HOTEL
SUDDAR STREET
CALCUTTA

179. M.K. Gandhi to American Friends, on the Way to Bombay,
3 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 357–9

DEAR FRIENDS,

As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position. For I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West—not even excepting Great Britain, British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. In America I suffer from the well-known malady called hero worship. The good Dr. Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr. Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fate had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the ‘Duty of Civil Disobedience’ scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city-dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station and Russia gave me in Tolstoi a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the downtrodden people of the earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto This Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or, as it has been popularly called, ‘Quit India’, with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants. I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim ‘Truth is God’ instead of the usual one ‘God is Truth’. That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Britain could not justify her position before the unmurmuring world conscience, which is there nevertheless. Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted unless Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the Allied cause. By that supreme act of justice Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonderworking engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears. You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot therefore disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the Allied cause if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said, 'But this is not the time.' We say, 'This is the psychological moment for that recognition.' For then and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause if it is also of equal value to India. The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first class magnitude.

I am, Your Friend, M. K. GANDHI

180. Press Statement Issued by Jawaharlal Nehru on the Communists and the Congress, 3 August 1942

The Hindustan Times, 3 August 1942; *SWJN*, Vol. 12, pp. 504-5.

The question has been raised repeatedly as to the position of Communists and others, who disagree with the present basic policy of the Congress, continuing to remain in elective Congress committees. The basic policy of the Congress is dissociation with the war effort of the British Government. The Communist Party has openly proclaimed its help and support of this war effort and has criticized Congress policy in this matter. Many Communists have been discharged from jail apparently on the assurance that they will help in every way the British war effort. Obviously there is a basic and fundamental difference between this attitude and policy and the Congress policy....

Communists and the Communist Party are perfectly entitled in their individual and group capacities to adopt any policy they like, whether one agrees with them or not. We are only concerned with them as Congressmen and more particularly, with them as members of Congress Executive Committees. It is manifestly wrong and absurd for anyone to be a member of an executive when he is opposed to the basic policy of that executive.

Most of our district and local Congress committees have no Communist members and have thus no such problem to face. A few committees have possibly some Communist members.

As the A.I.C.C. is meeting soon to adopt finally the policy which the Congress will pursue in the immediate future, it is not my desire to lay down any rule at this stage which will automatically exclude Communists. So far our policy has been to take action against individual Congressmen who clearly and deliberately offend against the basic Congress policy. It must be definitely understood, however, that whatever the final decision of the A.I.C.C. may be, it must be given effect to by all Congressmen, and no Congressman can carry on propaganda or agitation against it. In particular, any Congressman, who is a member of any Congress

executive, cannot do so. In the event of his doing so, he will automatically cease to be a member of that executive.

Even meanwhile it is desirable that those Congressmen who disagree basically from the present Congress policy should not continue to remain in any executive of the Congress. To remain there is not fair either to the Congress or to themselves. In no event can they be sanchalaks of any committee, district, city, town, tahsil or mandal.

What I have written applies to all those who are opposed to Congress policy, whether they are members of the Communist Party, the Forward Bloc or any other group, or disagree fundamentally in their individual capacities....

181. M.K. Gandhi on What Editors Can Do, on the Way to Bombay,
3 August, 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 360.

Q. What do you expect the editors to do in the crisis that has overtaken us?

A. I am proud of the way the Indian Press as a whole has reacted to the Congress resolution. The acid test has yet to come. I hope that the Press will then fearlessly represent the national cause. It is better not to issue newspapers than to issue them under a feeling of suppression. At the same time I do not want them to be blind followers of the Congress and to endorse what their reason or conscience rebels against. The national cause will never suffer by honest criticism of national institutions and national policies. The danger to be guarded against is the inflaming of communal passions. The forthcoming movement will mean nothing if it does not end in bringing communal harmony and honourable peace with the British people. Whatever may be said to the contrary I maintain that the Congress policy has been framed in no hostile spirit against the British people. I do hope, therefore, that the Press will warn those who have the nation's cause at heart against countenancing violence either against the British people or among ourselves. It must retard our progress towards our goal.

182. Vallabhbhai Patel's Speech: Congress Prepared to Dissolve Itself,
Let Britain Transfer Power to Any Party
The Tribune, 3 August 1942.

Surat, Aug.2

Let Britain only transfer power to Indian hands, whether it is to the Muslim League or any other party, and the Congress is prepared to dissolve itself, declared Sardar Patel, addressing a public meeting here. The Sardar added that the Congress was started with the independence of India as its aim and the only goal and once that was achieved, the body would willingly cease to function.

The Sardar traced the history of the Congress leading to the Wardha resolution and said the Congress was accused of having abandoned its non-embarrassment policy. But it had been awaiting for three years in expectation of any Government move to grant independence. As the war was at the doors of India, the Congress could not wait any more, because no country could be defended by dependent people. Britain only would be responsible for any state of anarchy that might ensue as a result of the 'Quit India' policy.

183. M.K. Gandhi on Future of Harijans

The Tribune, 3 August 1942.

Ahmedabad, Aug. 3

‘The constitution which I could influence would contain a provision making the observance of untouchability in any shape or form an offence,’ writes Mahatma Gandhi in the ‘Harijan’ in reply to questions by a Harijan M.L.A. seeking clarification of the position of ‘Harijans’ in the future constitution to be framed.

Answering a question, ‘Will you advise the Congress and the leaders of the various majority parties in the legislatures in the provinces to nominate the Cabinet members from among the scheduled caste legislators who enjoy the confidence of the majority of scheduled caste members?’ Mahatma Gandhi writes: ‘I cannot. The principle is dangerous. Protection of its neglected classes should not be carried to an extent which will harm them and harm the country. A cabinet minister should be a topmost man commanding universal confidence. A person after he has secured a seat in an elected body should depend upon his intrinsic merit and popularity to secure coveted positions.’

184. M.K. Gandhi’s Letter to T.B. Sapro, Birla House, Bombay,
4 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 369–70.

Dear Dr. Sapro,

I have your kind letter. On the question of C.D. we have differed from the very commencement years ago. Yet its mere mention has brought new hope to the people and set the world athinking. Nevertheless you may depend upon my doing all I can to avert the crisis, if by milder measures I can possibly reach the same result. But I have no faith in my capacity to shoulder the burden you would put upon me.

Yours sincerely,

M.K. GANDHI

185. Draft Instructions for Civil Resisters: Confidential, For Working
Committee Members Only, Bombay, 4 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 364–7.

On the day of the hartal no processions should be taken out nor meetings held in the cities. All the people should observe a twenty-four hours’ fast and offer prayers. If the owners of shops approve of our satyagraha struggle, they will all close their shops, but no one should be made to close his shop under coercion. In the villages, however, where there is no fear of violence or disturbance, meetings may be held and processions taken out and responsible Congressmen who believe in mass civil disobedience should explain the meaning of the contemplated satyagraha struggle to the people.

The object of our satyagraha is to secure the withdrawal of British rule and the attainment of independence for the whole of India. After the withdrawal of British rule, the constitution of the future government of the country will be settled by the joint deliberation of the whole

nation, including all parties. That government will belong not to the Congress nor to any particular group or party, but to the entire 35 crores of the people of India. All Congressmen should make it clear that it will not be the rule of the Hindus or of any particular community. It should also be well explained that this satyagraha is not directed against Englishmen but against British rule only, for we regard no one as our enemy. This should be brought home to villagers.

Local Congress workers should send all reports about the hartal and other activities to their Provincial Congress Committee and the latter to the central Congress office. In case the leader in a particular place is arrested by the Government, another should be chosen in his place. Every province should make necessary arrangements suited to its particular circumstances. In the last resort, every Congressman is his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. A final word: No one should think that those whose names are on the Congress register are the only Congressmen. Let every Indian, who desires the freedom for the whole of India and fully believes in the weapon of truth and non-violence for the purpose of this struggle, regard himself as a Congressman and act as such. If anybody has the spirit of communalism or harbours hatred or ill-will in his heart against any Indian or Englishman, he will best help the struggle by keeping aloof.

Such an individual will hinder the cause by joining the struggle. Every satyagrahi should understand before joining the struggle that he is to ceaselessly carry on the struggle till independence is achieved. He should vow that he will be free or die. Those employed in Government offices, Government factories, railways, post offices, etc., may not participate in the hartal, because our object is to make it clear that we will never tolerate Japanese, Nazi or Fascist invasion, nor British rule. Therefore, we shall not for the present interfere in the above-mentioned Government departments. But an occasion may certainly arise when we shall ask all those people who are employed in Government offices to give up their positions and join the satyagraha struggle. But all Congress members in the Central and Provincial Assemblies ought to vacate their seats and come out forthwith. In case an attempt is made to fill their places with enemies of the country's freedom, or henchmen of British Government, local Congressmen should be put up to oppose their election. The same applies to the Congress members of the municipalities and other public bodies. As conditions in different provinces are not the same, every Provincial Congress Committee shall make arrangements suited to its special circumstances.

If any government servant is called upon to perpetrate excesses or injustice it will be his clear duty to resign at once, giving the real reasons. Free Indian Government will be under no obligation to continue in its service all those Government functionaries who are at present serving the Empire on huge salaries; nor will it be under an obligation to continue the large pensions which are being drawn at present. All students reading in institutions conducted or controlled by the Government should come out of these institutions. Those who are above sixteen years of age should join the Satyagraha. Those who so leave these institutions should do so with a clear understanding that they are not to return to them until independence is achieved. There should be no coercion whatsoever in this matter. Only those who of their own free will wish to do so, should come out. No good can come out of coercion.

If excesses are committed in any place by the Government, people should offer resistance and endure the penalty. For instance, if villagers, labourers or householders are ordered to vacate their farms or homes they should flatly refuse to obey such orders. If an adequate compensation

is offered or if they are suitably provided for by grant of land, etc., elsewhere, they may vacate their farms or homes. Here there is no question of civil disobedience, but of simply refusing to submit to coercion or injustice. We do not want to hinder military activities, but neither shall we submit to arbitrary highhandedness. The salt tax causes great hardship to the poor.

Therefore, wherever salt can be made, poor people may certainly manufacture it for themselves and risk the penalty. Land tax is due only to a government which we recognize as our own. It is long since we have mentally ceased to recognize the existing Government as such, but until now we have not gone to the length of refusing the payment of land tax because we felt that the country was not prepared to go so far. But the time has now come when those who have the courage and are prepared to risk their all, should refuse to pay it. The Congress holds that the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else. If they part with a share of the produce to anyone, it is for the furtherance of their own interests. There are various systems of collecting land revenue. Where the zamindari system prevails the zamindars pay the tax to the Government and the ryot to the zamindar. In such cases, if the zamindar makes common cause with the ryot, his portion of the revenue, which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if a zamindar wants to side with the Government, no tax should be paid to him. This will, in the immediate present, spell ruin to the ryot. Therefore, only those who are prepared to face utter ruin should refuse payment of land revenue. Besides these, there are several other items which could be taken up. Directions in regard to these will be issued when the occasion arises.

186. Days of Decision in Bombay: Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel Meet M.K. Gandhi; Eyes of the World Turned towards AICC
The Bombay Chronicle, 4 August 1942.

With the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on Monday, the eyes of all India—nay of the world—are turned towards the City of Bombay, as decisions of vital significance to a world at war are awaited with bated breath.

Birla House Talks

Political discussions have already commenced. Sardar Patel who is already in the city and Pt. Nehru saw Gandhiji separately during the day and with the arrival of Maulana Abul Kalam azad the President of the Indian National Congress to-day (Tuesday), the stage will be set for what is acclaimed on all hands, the most historic meeting of the All-India Congress Committee.

Congress Executive

The Working Committee will meet later in the day and review the situation that has developed after the Wardha resolution of July 14 and the reaction it has had abroad before placing it before the All-India Congress Committee, which is scheduled to meet at 2 p.m. on Friday, the 7th instant.



187. Statement by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Press, Bombay, 5 August 1942
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 427–8.

‘*Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi*’

I have just seen for the first time the government’s communiqué issuing certain documents obtained during a police raid from the A.I.C.C. office. It is astonishing to what a pass the Government of India has been reduce to when it has to adopt these discreditable and dishonourable tactics. Normally such tactics require no answer. But as there is likely to be misapprehension, I wish to clear up some matters.

It is not our custom to keep detailed minutes of Working Committee’s meetings. Only final decisions are recorded. On this occasion the Assistant Secretary took brief notes unofficially apparently for his own record. These notes are very brief and disjointed and represent several days’ prolonged debates during which I must have spoken on various occasions for two or three hours. Only a few sentences were taken down and torn from their context. They often give a wrong impression. None of us had a chance of seeing these notes or revising them. The record is very unsatisfactory and incomplete and hence often incorrect.

In our discussions Mahatma Gandhi was not present. We had to consider every aspect of the question fully and to weigh the implications of words and phrases in the draft resolutions. If Gandhiji had been there, much of this discussion might have been avoided as he could have explained to us his attitude more fully.

Thus when the question of British withdrawal from India was considered, I pointed out that if the armed forces were suddenly withdrawn, the Japanese might well advance and invade the country without hindrance. This obvious difficulty was removed when Gandhiji later explained that British and other armed forces might remain to prevent aggression.

In regard to the statement that Gandhiji expected an Axis victory, an important qualification has been omitted. What he has repeatedly said and what I have referred to is his belief that unless Britain changes her whole policy in regard to India and her colonial possessions, she is heading for disaster. He has further stated that if a suitable change in this policy was made and the War really became one for freedom for all peoples, then victory would assuredly come to the United Nations.

The references to negotiations with Japan are also incorrect and entirely torn from their context. Gandhiji always sends notice to his adversary before coming into conflict. He would thus have called upon Japan not only to keep away from India, but to withdraw from China, etc. In any event, he was determined to resist every aggressor in India and he advised our people to do so even to the point of death. They were never to submit.

It is absurd to say that any of us envisaged any arrangement with Japan giving her right of passage, etc. What I said was that Japan would want this, but we could never agree. Our whole policy has all along been based on uttermost resistance to aggression.



188. Masses Are with the Congress: Sikh Members of Punjab PCC Issue Statement

The Tribune, 5 August 1942.

Lahore, Aug.4

Sardar Sampuran Singh, M.L.A., S. Pratap Singh, M.L.A., General Secretary, Punjab Provincial Committee, S. Gopal Singh Qaumi, Gyani Gurmukh Singh Musafar, S. Darshan Singh Pheruman, S. Basant Singh Gill (Moga) and Babu Labh Singh (Jullundur) members of the Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. have issued the following statement:-

‘Shortly after the 7th of August, the struggle for the independence of India will be started under the aegis of Mahatma Gandhi. On the eve of our historic struggle, when interested persons are trying to create confusion among the Sikh masses, we the Sikh members of the Working Committee of the P.P.C.C. wish to declare that the Sikh masses to a man will throw their full weight in ending the slavery of their motherland....

We are proud that the Sikhs have always been in the vanguard of the national struggle.

The impending struggle which, if God willing, is going to be the last struggle for Freedom, calls forth far greater sacrifices and sufferings than what they have suffered in the previous struggles.’

189. Resolution Passed by Meeting of the Citizens of Ellichpur, Berar,
6 August 1942

AICC Papers, F. No. P-15/1942, NMML.

This meeting of the citizens of Ellichpur, is of the opinion that the contemplated move by the Congress of starting C.D. Movement is perilous and fraught with danger to the interest of this Nation and is likely to create chaos and iternal [*sic*] troubles and foster Goonda spirit in the nation. We, therefore request the All India Congress Committee to reconsider this in-opportune move at this critical juncture. This meeting also urges the Government to find out an honourable solution to meet this critical situation. This meeting further authorizes the president of this meeting to forward a copy of this resolution to the secretary All India Congress Committee, Bombay, and to Provincial Government C.P. & Berar.

190. Formation of Special Corps by CSP and Jawaharlal Nehru

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, pp. 110–11.

A source report from Calcutta, dated 4th August, 1942, states that in anticipation of early arrests the Congress Socialist Party in Bombay and Bihar and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in the United Provinces (in co-operation with the C.S.P.) were organizing secret Congress Corps to carry on the Satyagraha movement. The People’s Volunteer Brigade was the nucleus in Bombay and Jawaharlal was organizing a similar corps in the United Provinces without giving it a special name. Ram Nandan Misra was said to have been doing the same in Bihar. This subject is connected with the general one of Volunteer Organisations and I have said that it is susceptible of deeper investigation. There is another instance suggestive of such organization by Jawahar Lal Nehru, appearing from a United Provinces report of 6th August, 1942. There is mention again

of visits to the Benares Hindu University and the Kashi Vidyapith, but the report mainly deals with Dr. Keshar (Keskar?) Foreign Secretary of the A.I.C.C. It is said that he urged Professor Raja Ram Shastri to keep a batch of Vidyapith students in readiness; they were not to plunge into the movement at the very start, but would help in organizing it afterwards.

191. M.K. Gandhi's Statement to the Press about Government Seizure of a Document from the AICC Office, 5 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 370-3.

I want to make a remark or two about the manner in which the Government have got this document. I think that the procedure thus adopted of searching the A.I.C.C. Office and seizing documents was in itself reprehensible. The Congress is not an illegal organization. It is acknowledged to be the oldest representative national organization. Its representatives have, under the partial autonomy given by the Government of India Act, successfully administered seven large provinces of India, and, so far as I am aware, without a single exception, the Governors of those provinces have nothing but praise for the considerable administrative talent and devotion to duty shown by the Ministers who were Congress representatives. Such an organization deserves, to say the least, a better treatment than the Government had accorded it by its procedure with the A.I.C.C.

Their action becomes more reprehensible when they make what I consider illegitimate use of the documents seized. They might have had the courtesy of referring the documents to the A.I.C.C. and heard what the Committee had to say before making public use thereof. In spite of the effort of the Home Department to discredit the members of the Working Committee, the reading of the notes, unauthenticated though they are, will not make any difference, at least in India, in the prestige which the Congress enjoys. There is nothing in it of which any member has any cause to be ashamed.

I do not know what should be the journalistic attitude to such use of documents seized in the manner I have shown and sprung upon an unsuspecting public at a most critical time both for the Government and the people. But I leave the profession to judge for itself.

Q. The whole inference of Pandit Nehru's statements in the documents is that your belief is that Japan and Germany will win the war. Does that represent your considered opinion?

A. You have been good enough to show me Panditji's statement on the document issued by the Government. After his full and frank explanation I hardly think I need answer your questions. I wholly agree with the opinion expressed by him. That, however, is his own reaction to the draft resolution sent to the Working Committee.

As the language of that draft shows, it had many i's to be dotted and t's to be crossed. It was sent through Mirabehn to whom I had explained the implications of the draft and I said to her or to the friends of the Working Committee who happened to be in Sevagram to whom I had explained the draft, that there was an omission, deliberate, from my draft as to the foreign policy of the Congress and, therefore, any reference to China and Russia.

For as I had said to them, I derived my inspiration and knowledge from Panditji about foreign matters of which he had been a deep student. Therefore, I said that he could fill in that part in the resolution.

But I may add that I have never even in the most unguarded moment expressed the opinion that Japan and Germany would win the war. Not only that. I have often expressed the opinion

that they cannot win the war, if only Great Britain will once for all shed her imperialism. I have given expression to that opinion more than once in the columns of *Harijan* and I repeat here that in spite of all my wish to the contrary and of others, if disaster overtakes Great Britain and the Allied Powers, it will be because even at the critical moment—most critical in her history—she had most obstinately refused to wash herself of the taint of imperialism which she has carried with her for at least a century and a half.

The suppressed races of the earth will never see the fine distinction that Panditji and following him I can see and make between Fascism and imperialism. The difference, if any, discerned by the man in the street will be not of kind but only of degree, and therefore I have pleaded and shall plead even as I am fighting with all the earnestness I command that Britain will shed that taint, and that her great ally America will make her do so, and then be sure of victory, no matter how prolonged the struggle and what cost it requires.

To say the least, then the Allied Powers will earn the blessings of the dumb but countless millions, apart from the gain in men and material that the free association of these peoples will bring to the Allies. I would count their blessings to be of far higher value than every other consideration.

I have, therefore, nothing to withdraw and nothing to be ashamed of about the draft I had the privilege of sending to the Working Committee.

Q. Nehru states that according to your plans after British withdrawal, India would possibly negotiate with Japan and even allow her a large measure of civil control, military bases in India and right of passage for her troops.

A. As to your second question, I can only say that you have put it because, I regret to have to say, you have not studied my writings in *Harijan* before the draft was written and after. Having such confidence—for which many of my friends say I have no warrant—in the efficacy of the weapon of non-violent non-co-operation with all its implications that I have presented to the nation, I maintain that I could not be guilty of harbouring any such thought you have attributed to me. Panditji has explained quite clearly what could be his own meaning and interpretation of my draft.

I add by way of emphasis that I had purposely incorporated the sentence about negotiations with Japan, and if ultimately it was dropped and I associated myself with the deletion, I did so out of my regard for my co-workers not because I was uncertain as to what I meant to do.

It is the essence of the use of the weapon that you will always give your opponent the opportunity of doing the right thing, and if India became an independent nation tomorrow and I was witness to the grand phenomenon, I would certainly advise and plead with the Provisional Government to send me—old as I am—to Japan and I would plead with her in the first instance, to free China, her great neighbour, from the menace that Japan has become and to tell her that if she does not do this elementary justice, she will have to count upon the stubborn resistance of millions who had at long last found themselves in possession of a thing which every nation prizes before everything else.

That gentle notice—or entreaty it should be called—that entreaty will not be backed at least tomorrow with any military show, because I will not dangle before Japan the show that will still be made by the Allied Powers whose operations will still go on in India with the free consent of India. [India] become free will carry with it the power implied in the use of the matchless moral weapon of non-violent non-cooperation. And I am sure I will make the appeal not without hope of success.

That was the meaning of the sentence the use of which at the present juncture is intended to bring discredit upon my devoted head. I shall take the discredit and so much the better if I can take India's freedom also with it.

192. Underground Preparations

P.N. Chopra (ed.), *Quit India Movement: British Secret Report (Wickenden Report)*, pp. 111–12.

... The first reference is in a source report from Benares dated 27th July, 1942, when a private meeting of Congress workers was held by Dr. Sampurnanand, one time United Provinces Congress Minister. The decision is said to have been taken that Congress dictators would be appointed to control the movement in every district as far as possible. Their identity would be kept secret. Reference again has to be made to Govindrao Deshpande's activities reported from Bombay, where he is said to have been preparing underground machinery for maintaining and continuing the struggle as well as for seizing power. Giani Mehr Singh supports Ram Nandan Misra in his reference to the meeting of the executive of the Congress Socialist Party when it was decided to go underground if arrests were made. He adds that sabotage was decided upon in the same meeting. Annu Guruji, in speaking about the secret meeting of Congress workers of Belgaum on August 5th, says that it was decided to go underground wherever possible and conduct the movement. Of considerable interest is the U.P. report dealing with Dr. Keskar. He, it will be remembered, had been to Benares to work up the students in the University. He evinced optimism in the success of Gandhi's contemplated move and he added that his ill-health would serve as a cover for avoiding arrest and expressed his intention of going underground after the A.I.C.C. meeting to organize the Congress movement in the country. Yusuf Mehar Ali's address to students on 'How to make a Revolution' has implicit in it underground activities.... That underground ideas were widespread is obvious from the fact that so many leaders went underground as soon as arrests were made and with varying measures of success managed to remain underground, conducting the movement from below. In particular, members of the A.I.C.C. themselves disappeared. This was most noticeable in the United Provinces where unwise publicity permitted of no less than 23 A.I.C.C. members concealing themselves, and we know how effective the movement became in that Province. Bombay too had as many as 11 members who managed to avoid arrest. Actually 53 A.I.C.C. members escaped arrest in the first instance and all of them remained in concealment, which could only have been with intention to advance the movement. The intensity of the disturbances is, I think, the best indication of definite planning as opposed to mere general efforts having preceded their outbreak ...

193. 'M.K. Gandhi's Move Will Lead to Disaster': Fazl-ul-Haq's View;
'Cry Halt and Consider', Says Syamaproshad Mookherjee
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 6 August 1942.

Calcutta, Aug. 6

The hope that saner counsel would prevail with the Congress and nothing would be done which would bring disaster to India and its people, was expressed by the Chief Minister of

Bengal, Mr. A.K. Fazl-ul-Huq, presiding over Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee's death anniversary meeting to-day.

.... Mr. Huq referred to the implications of the Congress resolution and pointed out that 'nothing but disaster will happen to the country if Mr. Gandhi's programme were accepted by the people'. He emphasized the clear duty of the Government to deal firmly with the situation and laid stress on the fact that the Government of the day would have to abdicate if they failed to deal with the situation firmly and courageously.

Dr. Mookherjee's Appeal

An appeal to both parties to cry halt and to consider before a plunge was finally taken whether any settlement was possible which would satisfy the legitimate anxiety on the part of the British Government to see to the welfare of India and at the same time fulfil the rights and aspirations of the Indian people was made by Dr. Syamaprosad Mookherjee, Finance Minister of Bengal, presiding over another meeting.

Referring to the A.I.C.C. session as a fateful one, with which was closely connected the future cause of Indian freedom, Dr. Mookherjee pointed out that any movement if started now would be of a character entirely different from similar past movements inasmuch as the enemy, who was standing at the gate, would welcome signs of internal disruption and disunity as a source of special strength to him. India could not be defended today without British co-operation.

Dr. Mookherjee concluded: 'To my mind if the British Government has actually decided to part with power so far as Indian administration is concerned, some formula can form a basis for negotiation without throwing the country [into] a whirlpool of chaos and confusion.'

194. Introduction to Government Secret Circular, Bombay, 6 August, 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 373-5.

I have had the good fortune to have friends who have supplied me with titbits of national importance such as I am presenting to the public herewith. Mahadev Desai reminds me that such an occasion occurred some seven years ago when a friend had unearthed the famous Hallett Circular. Such was also an occasion when the late Swami Shraddhanandji was given an important document, though not of the sensational character as the Hallett Circular or Sir Frederick Puckle's very interesting production and that of his lieutenant Shri D.C. Das. The pity of it is that the circulars were secret.

They must thank me for giving the performance as wide a publicity as I can. For it is good for the public to know to what lengths the Government can go in their attempt to suppress national movements, however innocent, open and above board they are.

Heaven knows how many such secret instructions have been issued which have never seen the light of day. I suggest an honourable course. Let the Government by all means influence public opinion in an open manner and abide by its verdict. The Congress will be satisfied with a plebiscite or any other reasonable manner of testing public opinion and undertake to accept the verdict. That is real democracy. *Vox populi vox dei*.

Meanwhile, let the public know that these circulars are an additional reason for the cry of 'Quit India', which comes not from the lips but the aching hearts of millions. Let the Dases know that there are many other ways of earning a living than betraying national interests. Surely it

is not part of their duty to lend themselves to the very questionable methods as evidenced by Sir Frederick Puckle's instructions.

195. Sir Frederick Puckle's Confidential Government Circular

The Hindustan Times, 17 August 1942.

The following circular marked 'confidential' and 'express letter' and dated July 17 was issued on behalf of the Government of India (Department of Information and Broadcasting) under the signature of Sir Frederick Puckle, to the Chief Secretaries to all Provincial Governments and the Chief Commissioners of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, Baluchistan and Coorg:

We have three weeks until the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on August 7. During this time the matter is mainly a problem of propaganda to mobilize opinion against the concrete proposals contained in the Congress resolution and against the threat with which the resolution concludes, described by Gandhi as 'open rebellion.' We have to (1) encourage those on whose support we can depend, (2) win over the waverers and (3) avoid stiffening the determination of Congressmen; with the object either of putting pressure on the Congress to withdraw from its position, or, if action has to be taken against Congress, to secure that such action has the support of public opinion inside and outside India. Please intensify your publicity through all available channels with the aim of securing openly expressed and reasoned opposition to the scheme of the resolution from individuals of influence and important non-Congress organizations. Following are suggested main lines of publicity:-

- (1) No question of moral principle is involved, since His Majesty's Government's declared policy for the future of India is that her own people should devise their own form of independent government after the victory has been won, and that during the intervening period there should be, within the existing constitution, immediate and effective participation of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations.
 - (2) The question at issue is one of expedience. Are the proposals in the resolution practical in the middle of war and are they likely to increase the chances of victory for the United Nations or shorten the war by a single day?
 - (3) Whatever the answer to (2), there is no doubt that a campaign of civil disobedience involves recklessly putting the cause of the United Nations in jeopardy and encouraging the Axis.
 - (4) Japan is hesitating whether to turn north against Russia or west against India. Gandhi admits that acceptance of the resolution means administrative anarchy, rejection certainly means civil commotion; either way it is a direct invitation to Japan to turn to the west.
 - (5) The Congress leaders have now become the heroes of the Axis broadcasts, a clear indication that India's enemies think that Congress's proposals are to their benefit.
 - (6) The only road by which India can achieve her destiny is through the victory of the United Nations. 'A free India is not possible in a world of slaves.'
4. Some general criticisms of the resolution are:-
- (a) The resolution is a party manifesto; it is the Congress speaking and not India. The only grounds on which it could be considered a serious document and not a piece

of propaganda would be, if it had been subscribed to by all parties. But it pointedly disregards the wishes and feelings of everyone except the Congress. On the war issue, Muslims, Sikhs, Communists, Royists, organized labour, the Kisan Sabhas and important student organizations are opposed to the Congress. Success of voluntary recruitment proves that on the war issue Congress does not speak for India.

- (b) Note the blatantly hypocritical interpretation of the earlier satyagraha movement, described at the time by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan as a stab in the back of the British.
- (c) Note misrepresentation of the Cripps proposals which promised to India the choice of Dominion Status or Independence as soon as victory was won.
- (d) Note that the Congress have made no attempt whatever to solve the 'communal tangle.' On the contrary, for the suggestion that it was possible to come to terms with the Muslim League, Rajagopalachari has been forced to resign from the Congress.
- (e) Note the statement that there is widespread ill-will towards Britain and satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. Such satisfaction is confined to Congressmen, and if there is ill-will, it has been intentionally fostered by the Congress, who, if they had been serious in their protestation of sympathy with the cause of the United Nations, could have swung the opinion the other way.
- (f) Note claptrap about transferring power to workers coming from the Congress, a purely authoritarian body in its organization and dominated by big business and the middle classes. The workers in any case are at present unfranchised and they certainly cannot be enfranchised in time for them to have any influence on a provisional war government.

.... 6. It would be advisable at the present stage to abstain from attacking the Congress too directly, e.g. by calling it a Fifth Column, etc, and certainly to abstain from attacks on individuals; either will openly rally loyal Congressmen in support of a cause in which they may not genuinely believe. For the moment the object is to mobilize public opinion against the Congress policy as detrimental to the successful conduct of the war. Loyalists and waverers may be assured that Government has the means to deal suitably with trouble and intends to use them.

7. The National War Front should be used to the fullest to oppose proposals which can only be detrimental to the war effort. Speeches, letters to the local press, leaflets, cartoons, posters, whispering campaigns are possible media for local publicity. Instructions to All India Radio stations will be given at the Centre.

Following are suggestions for cartoons or posters:-

- (1) The scene is the room of a house, with doors on left and right. Through the left door a British soldier is disappearing and a Congressman is waving good-bye to him from the middle of the floor. Next to the Congressman is a peasant looking towards the right door, through which the head of Japanese soldier appears. Possible caption: 'Babuji, look who is coming.'
- (2) Scene: a cross road. A signpost pointing to victory. Two travelers: One says, 'Which is the road to independence?' Other answers, 'Come along with me. The road to victory leads to where you want to go.'
- (3) Hitler, Mussolini, Tojo each with a microphone saying, 'I vote for the Congress resolution.'...

196. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to the Associated Press, Bombay,
6 August 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 375-6.

Q. Does the resolution mean peace or war? There is an interpretation particularly among the foreign journalists, that it means declaration of war and that the last three paragraphs of the resolution are the really operative part. Is the emphasis on the first part or the last part of the resolution?

A. The emphasis in any non-violent struggle, projected or in operation, is always on peace. War, when it becomes an absolute necessity.

Q. Do you contemplate the immediate establishment of a provisional government and, if so, how do you expect it to come into being? 'Do you think that there would be a period of interregnum between the endorsement of the resolution by the A.I.C.C. and the starting of the mass struggle?

A. If independence is ushered in with perfect British goodwill, then I expect an almost simultaneous establishment of a provisional government which, being just now based, as it must be of necessity, on non-violence, will, to command universal confidence, represent the free and voluntary association of all parties.

Q. Do you contemplate any negotiation between the Congress and the British Government before launching a mass struggle?

A. I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know that what I contemplate doing according to my wont can be in any way described as being in the nature of negotiation, but letter will certainly go to the Viceroy, not as an ultimatum but as an earnest pleading for avoidance of a conflict. If there is a favourable response, then my letter can be the basis for negotiation.

Q. What is the maximum time you are prepared to wait to see if there is any response from the British Government and the United Nations to the 'last-minute appeal' of the A.I.C.C....

A. The object with which the demand for immediate withdrawal is made does not allow of a long interval for the simple reason that the war will not be suspended while, in expectation of something turning up, the interval is contemplated. The Working Committee itself, which is sincerely eager to mobilize the whole of free Indian opinion in favour of the war effort, is impatient to do so, and in view of the terrible suspense created throughout India it is altogether wrong both for the Congress and British Power to prolong the suspense for a day longer than is warranted by force of circumstance beyond control.

197. M.K. Gandhi's Message to China, 7 August 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 377.

Let China know that this struggle is as much for her defence as it is for India's liberation, for, in that liberation is involved her ability to give effective assistance whether to China or to Russia or even to Great Britain or America.



198. Telegram from Madan Mohan Malaviya to M.K. Gandhi, 7 August 1942

Correspondence with M.M. Malviya, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

God bless your noble endeavour to serve motherland and mankind.

Malaviya

199. M.K. Gandhi's Reply to Malaviya's Telegram, on or after 7 August 1942

Correspondence with M.M. Malviya, M.K. Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection), NMML.

Malaviyaji,

Treasure your blessings. They will encourage me along hazardous journey.

Gandhi

200. Vallabhbhai Patel's Offer: Echo in Commons

The Bombay Chronicle, 7 August 1942.

London, Aug.6

Labourite Sorensen in the Commons called Mr. Amery's attention to a reported statement by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel that the Congress did not seek power for itself but would be satisfied if India was handed over to the Muslim League or any other Indian party.

He asked if Mr. Amery, in view of the political significance of this, would seek official amplification from the Congress, and whether this is in any way affected the British Government's attitude.

Mr. Amery replied, it is not easy to reconcile the various utterances of individual representatives of the Congress. The conclusion of the forthcoming meeting of the All India Congress Committee will no doubt define the official policy of the party.

Mr. Sorensen: 'If this statement is accurate, does it not indicate that the alleged hostility to the Muslim League is not so severe as is sometimes assumed?'

Mr. Amery did not reply to the supplementary question.

201. States Peoples' Conference Executive Discusses Congress Decision

The Bombay Chronicle, 7 August 1942.

The part that should be and is likely to be played by the Princes and the subjects of Indian States in any campaign that might be launched or any action taken in pursuance of the Congress resolution demanding the termination of the British domination of India, is understood to have been discussed at a meeting of the State Peoples' Conference held at Birla House on Thursday.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presided and among those present was Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, member of the Congress Working Committee.

It is gathered that two trends of opinion were expressed at the meeting. One view was that the States' subjects should join in the Congress campaign on the plain question of immediate Independence for India and should not raise any other issues. The other view was that it would not be possible to rouse popular enthusiasm unless local grievances were also included. According to this school of thought, while the States people should extend full support to the Congress stand, they should simultaneously put forward a demand for Responsible Government in the States.

The Committee will meet again at Birla House on Friday.

States' Workers Confer

Later on Thursday an informal meeting of workers from the states who have come here in connection with the A.I.C.C. was held at the Congress House. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the meeting. It is understood that workers from nearly 40 different states in India discussed the political situation with special reference to local conditions.

It is felt in States circles that the Congress Working Committee itself might give a lead in the matter by incorporating an additional clause in the resolution already adopted by it or by a separate resolution.

202. M.K. Gandhi's Speech at the Bombay AICC Meeting, 7 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 377-81.

Before you discuss the resolution, let me place before you one or two things. I want you to understand two things very clearly and consider them from the same point of view from which I am placing them before you. There are people who ask me whether I am the same man that I was in 1920 or whether there has been any change in me.

You are right in asking that question. I may tell you that I am the same man today that I was in 1920. The only difference is that I am much stronger in certain things now than I was in 1920. I may explain it by pointing out that a man goes about heavily clothed in winter but the same man may be found without such clothing in summer. This outward change does not make any difference in the man. There are people who may say that I say one thing today and another thing tomorrow. But I must tell you that there is no change in me. I stick to the principle of non-violence as I did before. If you are tired of it then you need not come with me. It is not necessary or incumbent upon you to pass this resolution. If you want swaraj and independence and if you feel that what I place before you is a good thing and a right thing then only accept it. It is only that way you can give me complete support. If you do not do that I am afraid you will have to rue for what you do. There is not much harm if a man does a wrong thing and repents but in the present case you will be putting the country also in danger. If you do not believe fully in what I say then I will request you not to accept it but leave it. But if you accept it and do not understand me properly then there is bound to be friction among us although it may be of a friendly nature.

Another point I want to impress upon you is your responsibility. The members of the All-India Congress Committee are like members of Parliament representing the whole of India. The Congress from its very inception has not been of any particular group or any particular colour or caste or of any particular province. It has claimed ever since its birth to represent

the whole nation and on your behalf I have made the claim that you represent not only the registered members of the Congress but the entire nation.

Referring to the Princes, Mahatma Gandhi stated that they were the creation of British power. Their number may be six hundred or more. They were created by the ruling power as you know to create differences between Indian India and British India. It may be true that there are differences in the conditions obtaining in British and Indian India but according to the people of the Indian States there is no difference as such. The Congress claims to represent them as well. The policy which the Congress has adopted towards States was drawn up at my instance.

There has been some change but the basis remains the same. Whatever the Princes may say, their people will acclaim that we have been asking for the very thing that they want. If we carry on this struggle in the way I want it, the Princes will get more through it than they can ever expect [from the British power]. I have met some Princes and they stated their helplessness by saying that we are more free than they are because they can be removed by the paramount power.

I will remind you that you should accept the resolution only if you approve of it from the heart because if you do not you may expose yourself to danger. We had the opportunity of running the Government at least in seven provinces. We did put in good work which was praised even by the British Government. Your work does not finish with the attainment of freedom. There is no place for dictators in our scheme of things.

Our object is to achieve independence and whoever can take up the reins may do so. It may be, you decide to place it in the hands of Parsis. You should not say why the Parsis should be entrusted with power. Maybe that power may be given to those whose names had never been heard of in the Congress. It will be for the people to decide. You should not feel that the majority of those who fought for it were Hindus and the number of Muslims and Parsis in the fight was small. Once they got freedom, they should change their whole mentality. If there is the slightest communal taint in your minds, keep off the struggle.

There are people who have hatred in their hearts for the British. I have heard people saying that they were disgusted with them. Common people's mind does not differentiate between British Government and British people. To them both are the same. They are the people who do not mind the advent of the Japanese. To them perhaps it would mean change of masters. But it is a dangerous thing. You must remove it from your mind. This is a crucial hour. If we keep quiet and do not play our part it would not be right on our part.

If it is only Britain and the United States who fight this war and if our part, is only to give monetary help, whether given willingly or taken from us unwillingly, it is not a very happy proposition. But we can show our real grit and valour only when it becomes our own fight. Then even a child will be brave. We shall get our freedom by fighting. It cannot fall from the skies. I know fully well that the Britishers will have to give us freedom when we have made sufficient sacrifices and proved our strength. We must remove any hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend of the British now than I ever was. The reason for this is that at this moment they are in distress. My friendship demands that I must make them aware of their mistakes. As I am not in the position in which they are, I can point out their mistakes. I know they are on the brink of a ditch and about to fall into it. Therefore, even if they want to cut off my hands, my friendship demands that I should try to pull them out of that ditch. This is my claim, at which

many people may laugh, but all the same I say this is true. At a time when I am about to launch the biggest fight in my life there can be no hatred for the British in my heart. The thought that because they are in difficulties I should give them a push is totally absent from my mind. It never has been there. Maybe that in a moment of anger they might do things which might provoke you. Nevertheless you should not resort to violence and put non-violence to shame. When such a thing happens you may take it that you will not find me alive, wherever I may be. My blood will be on your head. If you don't understand this it will be better if you reject this resolution. It will redound to your credit. How can I blame you for things which you may not be able to grasp. There is one principle in the fight which you must adopt. Never believe—as I have never believed—that the British are going to fail. I do not consider them to be a nation of cowards. I know before they accept defeat every soul in Britain will be sacrificed. They may be defeated and they may leave you just as they left the people of Burma, Malaya and other places with the idea of recapturing the lost ground when they can. That may be their military strategy. But supposing they leave us what happens to us? In that case Japan will come here. The coming in of Japan will mean the end of China and perhaps of Russia, too. In these matters Pandit Nehru is my guru (teacher). I do not want to be the instrument of Russia's defeat nor of China's. If that happens I would hate myself.

You know I like to go at a rapid speed. But it may be I am not going as rapidly as you want me to. Sardar Patel is reported to have said that the campaign maybe over in a week. I do not want to be in a hurry. If it ends in a week it will be a miracle and if this happens it would mean melting the British heart. Maybe wisdom will dawn on the British and they will understand that it will be wrong for them to put in jail the very people who want to fight for them. Maybe that a change may come in Mr. Jinnah's mind after all. He will think that those who are fighting are the sons of the soil and if he sits quiet of what use would Pakistan be for him.

Non-violence is a matchless weapon which can help everyone. I know we have not done much by way of non-violence and therefore, if such a change comes about I will take it as the result of our labours during the last twenty-two years and that God has helped us to achieve it. When I raised the slogan 'Quit India' the people in India who were then feeling despondent felt I had placed before them a new thing. If you want real freedom you will have to come together and such coming together will create true democracy—democracy the like of which has not been so far witnessed nor have there been any attempts made for such type of true democracy. I have read a good deal about the French revolution. Carlyle's works I read while in jail. I have great admiration for the French people. Pandit Jawaharlal has told me all about the Russian revolution. But I hold that though theirs was a fight for the people it was not a fight for real democracy which I envisaged.

My democracy means every man is his own master. I have read sufficient history and I did not see such an experiment on so large a scale for the establishment of democracy by non-violence. Once you understand these things you will forget the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. The resolution that is placed before you says we do not want to remain frogs in a well. We are aiming at a world federation in which India would be a leading unit. It can come only through non-violence. Disarmament is only possible if you use the matchless weapon of non-violence. There are people who may call me a visionary but I tell you I am a real bania and my business is to obtain swaraj. Speaking to you as a practical bania, I say, if you are prepared to pay the full price [of nonviolent conduct], pass this resolution, otherwise, do not pass it. If you do not accept this resolution I won't be sorry for it, on the contrary I would

dance with joy because you would then relieve me of the tremendous responsibility which you are now going to place on me. I want you to adopt non-violence as a matter of policy. With me it is a creed, but so far as you are concerned I want you to accept it as policy. As disciplined soldiers you must accept it in toto and stick to it when you join the struggle.

203. M.K. Gandhi's Interview to the Press, Bombay, 8 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 383-4.

If the resolution goes through this evening, I shall be the chief actor in the tragedy; it is therefore dreadful if any responsible Englishman considers me to be guilty of hatred of the British and admitted partiality for appeasement. In recent times I have not heard any other Englishman accusing me of hatred of the British. Anyway, I emphatically plead not guilty. My love of the British is equal to that of my own people. I claim no merit for it, for I have equal love for all mankind without exception. It demands no reciprocity. I own no enemy on earth. That is my creed. I have never admitted any partiality for 'appeasement' which has become a term of reproach in the English language. Peace I want among all mankind, but I don't want peace at any cost, and certainly not by placating the aggressor or at the cost of honour. Anyone, therefore, who thinks I am guilty of either vice will do great harm to the immediate purpose.

The resolution is intended to compass the very end which the article in question has at heart. We here feel that Britain cannot be extricated from its critical position unless India's hearty co-operation is secured. That co-operation is impossible without the people realizing that they are independent today. And they have to act swiftly, if they are to retain the independence regained after an insufferable period of foreign domination. No one can change the nature of a whole mass of mankind by promises, when the reality [of freedom] is the indispensable requisite for energizing them.

The resolution has provided for difficulty that the framers could anticipate. They have accounted for every valid criticism and I can say on behalf of the Congress that it would any time be prepared to consider and make allowance for any valid difficulty. No one responsible has even taken the trouble of discussing with the Working Committee of the Congress the difficulty there is about immediate recognition of India's independence. The Congress consent of the military operation of the Allied arms during pendency of the War surely is sufficient answer to any difficulty that we could conceive. British or the Allies run no risk in recognizing independence. The risk is all on the side of India, but Congress is prepared to take it. Not only the British run no risk so far as conduct of war is concerned, but they gain by this one act of justice an ally counting 400 millions, and accession of strength that is derived from a consciousness of having done that justice.

By that act alone could Great Britain be distinguished from Nazis and Fascists and by no other. It therefore passes comprehension that such tremendous fuss is being made over doing a tardy act of simple justice.

204. Jawharlal Nehru on the Quit India Resolution, 7 August 1942

SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 454-7.

The conception of the resolution is not narrow nationalism, but it has an international background. The arguments for the resolution have already been sufficiently put before the

public. I am sure the bona fides of the resolution have been fully understood by all friends. The resolution is in no sense a challenge to anyone. If the British Government accept the proposal it would change the positions both internal and international, for the better from every point of view. The position of China would be improved. I am convinced that whatever change might come about in India, it must be for the better. The A.I.C.C. knows that Mahatma Gandhi has agreed that the British and other foreign armed forces stationed in India may continue. This has been agreed to in order not to allow the Japanese to come in.

I am surprised how intelligent people in England and America could have misunderstood the Congress stand unless, of course, they deliberately chose to misunderstand it. I have regretfully come to the conclusion that to some extent other governments are also following the British line of thought towards India. Today, the British Government is opposed to the Indian national movement for freedom. I am convinced that the British Government can never really think in terms of advancing the cause of freedom of India unless, of course, the entire character of the present British government is changed. I am not personally concerned with such a change, but I stand for dissociating myself with that government and that country. It is not for me to advise the British people what government they should have.

There is a great deal of criticism in America, too, about what India wants. We are accused, by some newspapers, that we are blackmailing. It is a curious change for a people to make who themselves had for generations carried on a struggle for freedom. If for demanding freedom we are called blackmailers then surely our understanding of the English language has been wrong. Whatever may happen in Whitehall, it is not going to stop us from working for our independence. We live for it and will die for it. I do not want to say anything at the present moment which might add to the feeling of bitterness that exists everywhere. I know that this War has produced great emotional reactions in people's minds which is one of the worst effects of the War and which makes it very difficult for the people to think straight and not to think in terms of violent hatred.

Nobody in Whitehall can think straight, I suppose. There is falsity everywhere. You listen to the radios, London, Berlin or Tokyo. One does not know what is the truth. I am prepared to make many allowances for the emotional background in England and America. I do not really mind if people there get angry. But I feel sorry for the people in England and America who have a perverted way of looking at the Indian question. They are so wrong that they will certainly land themselves in difficulty. After all, just think what would have been the course of history, particularly that of Britain, if she had taken right steps with regard to India in the last two years. If Britain had acted rightly, the entire history of the War would have been different. But in spite of perils and disasters, England has stuck to her imperialism and Empire. The fact is patent to me that the British Government, and, for certain, the Government of India think the Indian National Congress to be their enemy number one. If the Government of India is going to treat the people of India like this, then we also know how to behave with them. We have seen in the last few months an unparalleled example of inefficiency and incompetency of this government. The whole system is a rotten one. I do not want to associate myself with the creaking, shaking machinery that the Government of India is. As for the so-called National War Front, there is neither the nation, nor the war, nor any front in it. All that this front is now doing is opposing the Congress. I certainly do not mind that. The whole Government of India is built that way. The only occasion when it does function effectively and efficiently is when overnight it starts rounding up large numbers of people. One of these days some such efficient functioning will reappear against Congressmen.

It is a curious tangle that we are in. it is not going to be resolved by shouting or by the approaches of the British Government. May I, with all respect, suggest to the great people of America that they have all gone wrong in regard to India, China and the whole of Asia. Americans have looked upon India as an appendage to Britain, and Asia as the dependent of Europe and America. Some of them have thought in terms of benevolence towards these countries; but always with a taint of racial superiority. They have always considered themselves, because of their inventions during the machine age, to be infinitely better than us and also that we are a benighted backward people. But the people of Asia do not propose to be treated in that manner any longer. Asia is the mother continent of the world, and India and China constitute the real mother countries of the world. What is the good of such people, who, simply because they have some very great material achievements to their credit, have forgotten or are not learning the very essence and art of living? They have built and are building better motor cars. This is a machine age. We will also learn to build machines—better machines. Americans have forgotten the magnificent achievements of China and India. It is China and India, with the experience of ages, who have learned the art of living decently even without the material achievements considered necessary for such living.

I hate poverty. My grievance against the British is that they have made Indians miserable, poverty-stricken wrecks of humanity. We are now taking a step from which there will be no going back. If there is goodwill on the other side, then everything would be all right and the whole course of the War and the future of the world would be changed. The change would be not merely emotional but in the material sense also. But that is not to be. There might be some difficulty. It is my conviction that this resolution is the only way, the effective way, in which we can help China and Russia and I know how terrible the situation is there. It is no good looking at Asia as a side-show. Asia is the centre of the War and it is Asia that is going to determine the final result of the War. Therefore, I want to prepare today, even at some risk and peril, so that the final result of the War should be the right kind of result. We must go forward even though it involves certain perils. I should like my fiends, who do not agree with this resolution or who do not try to understand it, to respect our bona fides. People should realize that if there is any trouble in India, it is we who would suffer. If there is internal trouble or an external invasion by Japan, it is we who would suffer. England might be distantly affected but we will have to die immediately. The problem of meeting aggression concerns us deeply. How can I, after seeing the incompetence of the government, trust them? Their whole attitude is one of retreat. We, however, want to be valiant fighters. It is not a narrow nationalist resolution. I am proud of Indian nationalism because it is broadbased and has an international background.

The movement contemplated is not for merely achieving national ends but for achieving world freedom. The Congress is plunging into a stormy ocean and it would emerge either with a free India or go down. Unlike in the past, it is not going to be a movement for a few days, to be suspended and talked over. It is going to be a fight to the finish. The Congress has now burnt its boats and is about to embark on a desperate campaign. I can never persuade myself to work with a government which has neither vision nor intelligence. Nor would I remain a passive spectator of the great happenings that are taking place in the world. It appears to me, perhaps, I would live in eternal opposition to the Axis powers. I repudiate the suggestion that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are bargaining and haggling. In moments of excitement people are prone to say certain things, but this should not be dubbed as bargaining. How, by granting India's independence, would the war efforts of the United Nations be hampered or

how would chaos and anarchy follow in India? The resolution does not give out even one-tenth of the real feelings of the Indians towards the British Government.

205. M.K. Gandhi's Speech at AICC Meeting; Bombay, 8 August 1942¹
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 384–96.

I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution, and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that what they asked this Committee to accept through their amendments was not the correct representation of the situation. These friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concede has already been conceded by the Congress.

Time was when every Mussalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali Brothers were with me, the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Mussalmans as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost conviction and not a mask; I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were the honest expression of their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton, nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

What these Communist friends proposed through their amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from thousands of platforms. Thousands of Mussalmans have told me that if the Hindu–Muslim question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu–Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Mussalmans have sought after it. I consciously strove for its achievement from my boyhood. While at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi fellow students. I believed even at that tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the other communities, should assiduously cultivate the virtue of [good] neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt, if I made no special effort to cultivate the friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Mussalmans. It was as counsel for a Mussalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Mussalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I left them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation. In India, too, I continued

my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my life-long aspiration for it that made me offer my fullest co-operation to the Mussalmans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable? Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save the cow. But, whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. I co-operated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali Brothers, had they been alive today, would have testified to the truth of this assertion. And so would many others bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. The cow, like the Khilafat, stood on her own merits. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Mussalmans in the hour of their trial.

In those days I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Mussalmans, though with the passage of time they have now got used to it. Maulana Bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest, he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so, whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahmin cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an oldstyle structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. The members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity, that nobility of spirit, disappeared now? I should ask all Mussalmans, including Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath; it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone, he will realize and admit that I had no designs on Mussalmans and that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me if I injure their cause or betray their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it, whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action.

But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification I would say, 'Islam enjoins you not to revile even an enemy. The Prophet treated even enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity. Are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith? You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you distrusted and killed one who was a true and devoted friend of yours.' It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal and the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me, these abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not

hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? Because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realizes that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth. To the Quaid-e-Azam I would say: 'Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody's gift, so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing an untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth.'

The Quaid-e-Azam says that he is compelled to say bitter things but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and his feelings. Similarly I would say: I consider myself a friend of the Mussalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Quaid-e-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings, even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Mussalmans sitting here be reviled, if they do not see eye to eye with him? If millions of Mussalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Mussalmans who may appear to you to be misguided? Why should one with the following of several millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority? How did the Prophet work among the Arabs and the Mussalmans? How did he propagate Islam? Did he say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority? I, therefore, appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fair play nor justice in saying that the Congress must accept a thing even if it does not believe in it and even if it goes counter to principles it holds dear. Rajaji said: 'I do not believe in Pakistan. But Mussalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say "yes" to them just now? The same Mr. Jinnah will later on realize the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forgo the demand.' I said: 'It is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for settling it finally. If I hold the demand to be just, I should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Saheb. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it for the time being to placate Mr. Jinnah, disarm his suspicions and to see how he reacts to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate, it is not my method.'

The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of the Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by resort to violence. If the Hindus tyrannize over the Mussalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submitting all the differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask for its very life.

It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Mussalmans under Hindu domination. I do not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be a perpetual war between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the country will be doomed to continue warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah Saheb, 'You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity you can take only by the sword and in no other manner.'

There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter of life and death. If we Hindus and Mussalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this Empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Mussalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Mussalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Saheb thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If the war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China?

I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed.

But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for the Congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people. Congressmen must forever remain humble servants of the people.

The Quaid-e-Azam has said that the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the Muslim League, for the British took over the Empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim raj. The offer made by Maulana Saheb and by me does not imply establishment of Muslim raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews—every one of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

Millions of Mussalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back. What would his homeland be—Porbander or the Punjab? I ask the Mussalmans: 'If India is not your homeland, what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?' His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion, asking him if he had on embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion, she wrote to say: 'I do not mind his becoming a Mussalman so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Mussalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. If you are going to make a man of

him again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will, therefore, please see that he as a Mussalman abjures wine and women. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-cooperation with him will have to continue.'

India is without doubt the homeland of all the Mussalmans inhabiting this country. Every Mussalman should therefore cooperate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to any one class or community; it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to Mussalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the Hindus but on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear of a single instance of a Mussalman being killed by a Congressman. In the coming revolution, Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Mussalman against a Hindu's attack and vice versa. It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials of non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every Congressman, whether a Hindu or a Mussalman, owes this duty to the organization to which he belongs. The Mussalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nation-wide struggle that is to come.

I have said that much greater sacrifices will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Muslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. It contains an open incitement to organizations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an Empire whose ways are crooked. Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of satyagraha. In satyagraha, there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness to such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this Empire upheld on untruth and violence.

However gigantic the preparations that the Empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry a while? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had the condition been different, I should have asked you to wait yet awhile. But the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

Nevertheless, the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the mean while? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate? As you know, the spinning-wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteenfold constructive programme is, of course, there for you to carry out. What more should you do? I will tell you. Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism. It is not a make-believe that I am suggesting to you. It is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free

being. He will plainly tell the master: 'I was your bondsman till this moment, but I am a slave no longer. You may kill me if you like, but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you that if you release me from the bondage of your own accord, I will ask for nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me, though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on God, for food and raiment. God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am today a free man and will no longer depend on you.' You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. Maybe, he will propose the abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say: 'Nothing less than freedom.'

Here is a mantra, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is: 'Do or Die.' We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. Every true Congressman or [Congress] woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jails out of your consideration. If the Government keep me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge with God and your own conscience as witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

A word to the journalists I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government can't suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing-presses, etc., and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing-press voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen, even if the press was to be attached. As you know my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your Standing Committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't expect from you a command performance, that his Press notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. You will openly declare that you are whole-heartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

From the Princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wisher of the Princes. I was born in a State. My grandfather refused to salute with his right hand any Prince other than his own. But he did not say to the Prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that even his own master could not compel him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the Princes' salt and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant, it is my duty to warn the Princes that if they will act while I am still alive, the Princes may come to occupy an honourable place in free India. In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privileges or the privileged classes have a place.

Jawaharlal considers all property to be State-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly; I do not. I have kept a place for the Princes and the zamindars in India that I envisage. I would ask the Princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. The Princes may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true sense of the term. I visualize God in the assemblage of people. The Princes may say to their people: 'You are the owners and masters of the State and we are your servants.' I would ask the Princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The Empire too bestows power on the Princes, but they should prefer to derive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they may seek to do so as servants of the people. I do not want the Princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them: 'Do you want to remain slaves for all time? Why should you, instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people?' You may write to the Political Department: 'The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even the large Empires are crumbling? We, therefore, shall belong to the people from today onwards. We shall sink or swim with them.' Believe me, there is nothing unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are, so far as I know, no treaties enabling the Empire to coerce the Princes. The people of the States will also declare that though they are the Princes' subjects, they are part of the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the Princes, if the latter cast their lot with the People, but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the Princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not go

back on their word.

Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle, we have to work openly and to receive the bullets on our chest, without taking to heels.

I have a word to say to the Government servants also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did not resign his post, but he openly declared that he belonged to the Congress. He said to the Government that though he was a judge, he was a Congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held Social Reform Conference in the very pandal of the Congress. I would ask all the Government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and to declare their allegiance to the Congress as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle.

This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said: 'We get secret circulars from high quarters. What are we to do?' I replied, 'If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the Government: "I have received your secret circular. I am, however, with the Congress. Though I serve the Government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand methods."'

Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and leave the army. Soldiers come to me, Jawaharlal and to the Maulana and say:

‘We are wholly with you. We are tired of the governmental tyranny.’ To these soldiers I would say: ‘You may say to the Government, “Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries. We will obey your just orders, but will refuse to fire on our own people.”’

To those who lack the courage to do this much I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the Government then shower bombs, if they like. But no power on earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer. If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors: ‘We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to the Congress or to the Government? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You will remain at your posts but teach us and lead us unto freedom.’ In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions.

If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the ground for the next step.

There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this late hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. For the last twenty-two years, I have controlled my speech and pen and have stored up my energy. He is a true brahmachari who does not fritter away his energy. He will, therefore, always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I had to unburden my heart before you. I have done so, even though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it. I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India.

¹ M.K. Gandhi spoke first in Hindi and then in English. This is a translation of his Hindi speech.

206. M.K. Gandhi’s Speech at AICC Meeting, Bombay,
8 August 1942 (Continued)
CWMG, Vol. 76, pp. 396–401.

I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out what was agitating my soul to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in military language, their commander. But I do not look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over anyone. I do sport a stick which you can break into bits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated, when he is called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

Therefore I was bound to share with you, such thoughts as were welling up in my breast and tell you in as summary a manner as I can, what I expect you to do as the first step.

Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as I always do. The burden is almost unbearable and I have

got to continue to reason in those circles with whom I have lost my credit for the time being. I know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends, so much so that some of them have now begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now, I hold that my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill afford to lose it.

Such occasions arise in the life of a man who is a pure seeker after truth and who would seek to serve humanity and his country to the best of his lights without fear or hypocrisy. For the last fifty years I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and have rendered on more than one occasion such service as I could to the Empire; and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship, as I enjoy it today, with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown official relationship. Whether Lord Linlithgow will bear me out I do not know; but there has sprung up a personal bond between him and myself. He once introduced me to his daughter. His son-in-law, the A.D.C., was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me, and Lady Anne and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these titbits only to give you an earnest view of the personal bond which exists between us. And yet let me declare here that no personal bond will ever interfere with the stubborn struggle which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the Empire. It seems to me that I will have to resist the might of that Empire with the might of the dumb millions, with no limit but non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the British nation, to be true to the Empire. I mention it to testify that when that Empire forfeited my trust, the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me at this moment. The spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me he sums up the brightest tradition of English culture. I enjoyed closer relations with him than with most Indians. I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts every day. Whatever was in his heart he would blurt out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was friend of Gurudev, but he looked upon Gurudev with awe, not that Gurudev wanted it. Andrews had that peculiar humility. But with me he became the closest friend. Years ago he came to South Africa with a note of introduction from the late Gokhale. He is unfortunately gone. He was a fine Englishman. I know that the spirit of Andrews is listening to me. Then I have received a warm telegram from the Metropolitan (Dr. Westcote) of Calcutta, conveying his blessings, though, I know, he is opposed to my move today. I hold him to be a man of God. I can understand the language of his heart, and I know that his heart is with me.

With this background, I want to declare to the world that, whatever may be said to the contrary, and although I might have forfeited the regard and even the trust of many friends in the West, and I bow my head low, but even for their friendship or their love, I must not suppress the voice within, call it 'conscience', call it the 'prompting of my inner basic nature'. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology though I have not read many books on it. Such a man knows exactly what it is. That something in me which never deceives me tells me now: 'You

have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart.' It says, 'Forsake friends, wife, and all; but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die.'

Believe me, friends, I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. According to me, it is 120 years at least. By that time India will be free, the world will be free. Let me tell you, too, that I do not regard England, or for that matter America, as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage the coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races today? You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and American teachers, their history and their magnificent poetry have not said you shall not broaden the interpretation of that freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom, I am constrained to say, they are strangers to that freedom which their poets and teachers have described. If they will know the real freedom, they should come to India. They have to come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of earnest seekers of Truth.

It is the fundamental truth with which India has been experimenting for 22 years. Unconsciously, from its very foundations, long ago, the Congress has departed though non-violently from what is known as the constitutional method. Dadabhai and Pherozshah who held the Congress India in the palm of their hands had held on to the latter. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all they were real servants. They never countenanced murder and secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us Congressmen. But I trust the whole of India to launch upon a non-violent struggle on the widest scale. I trust the innate goodness of human nature which perceives the truth and prevails during a crisis as if by instinct. But even if I am deceived in this, I shall not swerve. From its very inception the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods, and the subsequent generations added non-co-operation. When Dadabhai entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a black man, but the English people defeated Salisbury, and Dadabhai, went to Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things, however, now India has outgrown.

It is with all these things as the background that I want Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their heart of hearts what crime India has committed in demanding independence today. I ask: Is it right for you to distrust us? Is it right to distrust such an organization with all its background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? Is it right, I ask, that by hook or crook, aided by the Foreign Press, aided, I hope not, by the President of the U.S.A. or even by the Generalissimo of China, who has yet to win his laurels, you should present India's stand in shocking lights?

I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madam Chiang who was my interpreter, and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madam Chiang. And he allowed me to read his mind through her. He has not as yet said that we were wrong in demanding our independence. There is a chorus of disapproval and protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for the British, but now British diplomacy stinks in my nostrils. Yet others are learning their lessons.

They may succeed in getting, through these methods, world opinion on their side for a time; but India will raise her voice against all the organized propaganda. I will speak against it. Even if the whole of the world forsakes me, I will say: 'You are wrong. India will wrench with non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands.'

Even if my eyes close and there is no freedom for India, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and to Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which today is pleading with bended knees for the fulfilment of a debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when India is met with such angry opposition, she says: 'We won't hit below the belt. We have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence.' I have been the author of the non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me talking this strong language. My non-embarrassment plea was always qualified by the proviso 'consistent with our honour and safety'. If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position today.

There are representatives of the Foreign Press assembled here today. Through them I wish to say to the world that United Nations, who say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove their bona fides. If they miss it, they will be missing opportunity of their lifetime, and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time and lost the battle. I want the blessing of the whole world, so that I may succeed with them. I do not want the United Powers to go beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm today. There is a fundamental difference between Fascism and even this imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get today is from the India which they hold in bondage. Think what difference it would make if India was to participate as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come today. It will have no taste left in it if today you, who have power to help, do not exercise it. If you can exercise it, what seems impossible today will, under the glow of freedom, become possible tomorrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China.

The road for running to Russia's help will be opened. Englishmen did not die in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. What shall enable us to retrieve this situation? Where shall I go and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to be aflame in the cause of world-deliverance, unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? Today they have no touch of life left. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow but today. I have, therefore, pledged the Congress and the Congress has pledged herself that she will do or die.

207. 'Offer of Cooperation': Jawaharlal Nehru's Speech, 8 August, at
AICC Meeting
SWJN, Vol. 12, pp. 457–61.

The debate on this resolution is over and I have also had my say. There are just a few points which I have partly said and partly not said—which I would like to say in English for the benefit of my friends who may not have followed me.

What is the resolution? You have seen and read it. It is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of co-operation. It is all that. It is not a threat but still behind it there is the obvious warning that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of cooperation but of a free India with other free peoples. There is going to be no cooperation on any other terms. On any other terms this resolution can only promise conflict and struggle. Let that be clear. Some of our friends abroad may think that we are acting

unwisely. I do not blame them. They move in their own environment. I want them to realize what we are saying. We are in dead earnest about the course we are going to adopt. Let there be no doubt about it. You may occasionally cheer and clap but the fact is that we are on the brink of a precipice and we are in dead earnest about it. I think this resolution of ours is not only a resolution of the All India Congress Committee but it does represent—as on many other occasions our resolutions have represented—the voice of India. I would even go a step further and say that it represents the voice of the entire oppressed humanity. If, by a miracle, Britain had accepted this resolution and acted according to its demands you would have seen such a wonderful change, not only in India but all over the world. It would have changed the whole nature of the War. It would have given it a real revolutionary background which it does not bear today.

Now, remember that the essential thing about this War is that it is something infinitely more than a war; it is a World War. That is big enough, but it is bigger than that: it is a part of and prelude to, and precursor of a vast revolution that is enveloping the whole world. This War may end or it may be carried on for some time, but no peace will be established, no equilibrium attained until the revolution runs its appointed course. Our misfortune has been that the leaders in the West did not realize the revolutionary significance of this War, or if they realized, they did not act accordingly. They are still carrying on in the same old way and think only in terms of more tanks and more aeroplanes. Probably in their position I would have done the same thing. They are not thinking of the vast surge of the elemental emotion of humanity. Unless they do this, they can never attain success. I hope they will learn, but, sometimes, I fear, that they will learn it too late.

Mr. Churchill and other Englishmen have not got over thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon race. In a recent speech Mr. Churchill visualized the day when the Anglo-Saxon race would march through the world in dignity and majesty. This is not a pleasant picture to contemplate and it is a thing not to be tolerated by Asia at any rate. Let that be clear. There is too much talk of majesty and dignity of the Anglo-Saxon race or the German race or the Italian race. There are other races also in the world and we have had enough of such talks. The racial superiority can no more be tolerated. We are going to cooperate with the British when we think it right to do so and when there is a right cause; but we are not going to act with them if we think that the cause is not right. At the present time, the Allied cause is only negatively right in the sense that Germany and Japan are worse. But Indian freedom would change the whole nature of the War and make it right positively. Even the people of Nazi Germany and those who are helping the Germans would feel the impact of the change. It would be a turning point of the War. But they simply talk about their own problems which have no significance for us and ask us not to do this and that and go on in their own ruts. The people in England, America and elsewhere are looking at every question from the narrow standpoint of a soldier. And it does not matter to them how other people view the Indian question. India says something which we believe—and I honestly believe—is not only in the interest of India but enormously in the interest of the Allied cause provided they accept it. They talk about blackmailing and threaten us. I can only tell them that we will not be deterred from our course by any amount of threats. On the other hand the Westerners ought to realize that at this stage threats could only make the position infinitely worse and more difficult for them. We have decided to take this course on which there is no going back. I repeat again: we shall try to remain calm. We have got big tasks ahead—big task for our country, and a big task for the world. Whether we function as

Indian National Congress or not, time may come when each individual will represent the Indian National Congress and work on his own. We must not in the excitement of the movement forget our high aims and objectives—high aims for India whose freedom we consider precious, and high aims and objectives with regard to the whole world. We are nationalists and we are proud of this fact. But we should not settle down to a narrow provincialism. We should always remember that we have to develop a right type of internationalism, but not pseudo-internationalism of the present-day world or of the League of Nations.

I beg everybody to consider this resolution in this spirit. Whether there are internal perils or external perils, after all, if the Japanese reach this country, you and I will suffer and not the people in London and Washington. You and I will have to die, face the situation, may have to face untold miseries and sufferings—we will have to face all that. People talk to us from Washington, New York and various other places. You know what Japan is. We know what subjection is and we know it better than Americans and Englishmen. We have had it for about two hundred years. We have come to the decision that it is better to throw off the fetters into the fire and come out as a free nation than be reduced to ashes.

We are prepared to pay any price for unity except the price of independence. What obstructions have not been placed in our path which have had no relation to the real issue? I can talk and negotiate with anybody who recognizes the need for democratic freedom for India, but I cannot negotiate with anyone who refuses to recognize the fundamental issue—the freedom of India. I was told during the Cripps negotiations that a certain leader insisted on behalf of Muslims that the Viceroy's power of veto should not be removed or in any way qualified. If any section wants that the British Viceroy should exercise his veto power against the decisions of his Indian cabinet, it means clearly that that section is against the freedom of India. I do not want to injure anyone's feelings especially at a time when we are about to launch a great struggle for freedom. I tried, for one whole year, to find out what the League wanted, but I was unable to understand what they wanted.

I have not been able to find a parallel to such a situation in the history of the world. I have not come across anywhere else such a situation except in the land of Hitler. The Sudeten crisis bears similarity to the situation here. For purposes of negotiations we were not allowed to select our own representatives. We are told that we cannot send Muslims to represent the Congress. This is an insult to our great organization and to our revered President. We were prepared to stake everything consistent with our dignity and self-respect for finding a satisfactory settlement. Whenever we knocked at the doors we found them bolted, and we knocked ourselves against a wall. Are we beggars to be treated like this? Are we going to be so dishonourable as to sacrifice the mansion of Indian freedom which we want to build? Are we going to be kicked about by men who have made no sacrifice for the freedom of India and who can never think in terms of freedom at all?

Our conscience is clear. We have done everything that is humanly possible for arriving at a settlement. The Muslim masses are not reactionary. We have made strenuous and sincere attempts to resolve the communal issue, but all our attempts have either been sabotaged or frustrated. The chief difficulty is that the problem is more political than communal.



208. Resolution Passed by the All India Congress Committee,
8 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, Appendix X, pp. 458–61.

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The committee approves of and endorses that resolution, and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the people of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect in the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A.I.C.C. therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations for the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the

country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with the Allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power.

While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Such a federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticism of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and their nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and to resist aggression, but is no answer to

that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest for world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government, which dominates over and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions of for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A.I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India the A.I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

209. The Andhra Circular: Translation of Cyclostyled Telegu Pamphlet Issued by the Andhra PCC

GOI Home Political File No. 24/14/42, NAI.

Programme of work for the attainment of complete independence:-

1. Cutting off of all telephone and telegraph wires.
2. Removal of rails, wherever possible, and demolition of bridges, red flags being posted (at places where demolition work is undertaken) to avert possible danger to human life.
3. Travelling in trains without tickets and pulling the chains to stop trains.
4. Visiting military camps and telling the military personnel to leave their jobs.
5. Visiting Police and other Government offices and forcing Government servants to resign their jobs.
6. Yarn and grains to be collected in villages which are self-sufficient.

7. Running our own post-offices and arranging for prompt delivery of letters.
8. Picketing the law courts, occupying the seat of the magistrate and performing his functions and also settling disputes with the help of panchayats.
9. Not to pay land tax, sales tax, etc.
10. To arrange to inform the village munsiffs and karnams that British rule in India has come to an end and that India has attained independence.
11. If the villager officers refuse to believe the above, they should be replaced by new officers.
12. If, however, replacement of the village officers by new ones is not practicable, they should be disowned by the villagers.
13. To organize hartals and news propaganda centres.
14. To organize picketing toddy and arrack depots, foreign cloth shops and Government offices.
15. To pass, if necessary, no-confidence motions against Government servants.
16. To impede the war efforts of the Government.
17. To tell the shop-keepers that British Government is no more in India and that the panchayat system of Government has taken its place.
18. Ryots and merchants to refuse to pay any kind of tax to the Government.
19. To arrange to prepare a seal, on the model of that of the Government of India, bearing the inscription 'Government of Free India' or 'Swarajya Sarkar' and use it.
20. To run parallel Government in competition with the British Government.
21. British currency notes have no value hereafter. Exchange your currency notes for silver coins.

Message delivered by Mahatma Gandhi while going to the jail:

1. That every Indian should, from this day onwards, regard himself as an independent man and his country as an independent country.
2. That every Indian should think that he is free to do anything in a non-violent manner to free his country from the fetters of bondage.
3. That they should paralyse the British Government in India.
4. That satyagrahis should sacrifice their lives in this struggle.
5. That India will attain freedom only if satyagrahis are prepared to invite and face death.
6. Do! Die! Either you must die in this struggle or obtain independence for the country.

Andhra Provincial Congress Committee,
Bezwada
Awake, Arise and Wait no more.

210. Viceroy's Council Confers: Four-fold Plan to Meet Congress Move *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8 August 1942.

New Delhi, August 7

For three days consecutively the Viceroy's Council has been meeting to discuss the situation arising from the Congress resolution.

There are, however, three notable absentees—Reginald Maxwell who is in Simla and Mr. M.S. Aney, and Mr. N.R. Sarkar who are away on tour. Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer is

understood to have taken a prominent part in the discussions, but the attitude of Indian members continues to be that though they would welcome an All Parties conference, the lead must be taken by leaders of major political parties or by Sir T.B. Saprú himself.

It is evident that Indian members are possessed by a feeling of helplessness, that owing to the sudden serious turn, which the situation has taken, they are unable to do anything. They are only inclined to blame both parties—the Congress for not having accepted Sir Stafford Cripps' offer and the British Government for this policy of delay and drift.

Four-Fold Plan

As the result of three days' discussions in the Viceroy's Council, it is now possible to indicate the official policy.

Firstly, there is at the moment no intention on the part of the Viceroy to call a leaders' conference, for the official view is reported to be that no useful purpose can be served by such a Conference at a present stage, in the absence of an agreement among the major parties.

Secondly no precipitate action is likely to be taken by the authorities, as an immediate consequence of A.I.C.C. resolution. Their action will depend on development after the A.I.C.C. meeting. Any over act on the part of the Congress or any attempt to organize Civil Disobedience, will however be immediately met to the extent necessary under the circumstances.

Thirdly, though no immediate action is apparently proposed against the 'Harijan', certain restrictions will immediately be imposed on the Press at present regarding the publication of plans of Civil Disobedience or similar measures.

Fourthly, owing to the necessity to prevent economic discontent in the country, active measures are being taken to deal with the problem of local shortages of food grains, allowances to workers to meet the increased cost of living and other wartime amenities to labour. This is obviously due to the recognition of the fact, that if room is given for economic discontent as a result of food scarcity or other reasons, it may directly help the Congress agitation.

Will the Viceroy Invite Mahatma?

There is no definite answer to the question whether Viceroy is likely to invite Gandhiji for a talk when he receives his letter. That will probably depend on the nature of the letter itself.

211. M.K. Gandhi's Message to the Country, Bombay, 5 am,

9 August 1942

CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 403.

Everyone is free to go the fullest length under ahimsa. Complete deadlock by strikes and other non-violent means. Satyagrahis must go out to die and not to live. They must seek and face death. It is only when individuals go out to die that the nation will survive.

Karenge ya marenge.

M.K. GANDHI



212. Another Message from M.K. Gandhi to the Country,
9 August 1942
CWMG, Vol. 76, p. 403.

Let every non-violent soldier of freedom write out the slogan 'do or die' on a piece of paper or cloth and stick it on his clothes, so that in case he died in the course of offering satyagraha, he might be distinguished by that sign from other elements who do not subscribe to non-violence.

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